



LOVE AND LIFE

WILLIAM FRANK MARTIN

LOVE AND LIFE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY
WILLIAM FRANK MARTIN

Author of "Sir Harry Vane," etc.



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TO ONE NEAR AND TRUE
WHO SHARES WITH ME IN
LOVE AND LIFE

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LOVE AND LIFE

STRIVINGS

This be my life, to know for why
I gladly live and shall gladly die;
To train my soul, tho' in palace, think
How I for the Grail my chalice drink;
Or teach me, if close in the lap of earth,
To drink with the dews of midnight mirth;
To bear my lot as a spirit can,
And purge of the beast my flesh of man:
That I may find, how gladly to live
Is unto the Giver the best we give.

This be my love, to feel the thrill
Of loon, or of larva, or life that is still;
To see in the vileness of alchemic dust
The chemistry-process by which all is just;
To find in sin's lump of a Caliban charm
Taking virtue from veins of a blood that is
warm;
To join with the heart a tongue that is kind,
To yoke my purse with a generous mind,
That friend and lover and God may see
They each have a lover of good in me.

1909

LOVE AND LIFE

After the painting by Mr. G. F. Watts, R. A.

Gently thy steps advancing, let me lead
Upon this rugged way. Thy hand in mine
Place trustingly, if so thy heart approve,
And we will urge our footsteps unto rest.
Thou, Life, it is that I in wisdom sought,
To thee with passionate yearnings I am come,
And seeking find within thy presence peace.

*My spirit whispers, Love! I know not whence
Thou art, nor why thy path draws unto mine.
It bids me onward, and I trust. If thou
A timely strength provide along the way,
To help my footsteps forward into light;
If One thou servest be my Lord, whose hand
In beauty spread the world, yet left so dark
Yon solitary waste that met my seeking,—
I thine to lead. Thy presence brings a staff,
Thy voice a vision wakens in my heart.*

And thou the vision that awakened me!
His son am I whose name is Solitude;
And where he met, from weary vigils turned,
Fair figured Dawn, at matins after dreams,
Awaiting the well-lighted task of day,
I, from two hearts of discipline and hope,
Had being. And oft in sylvan shade,

Or resting by the toilsome steep, whereon
My strength was tested, I of Virtue's font
Delighted drank—true nourisher to me.
And oft in silent grief, to cooling star,
'Neath wearied noontide, or on joyous eve,
The thirst of knowledge fed me, as each word
Spoken of eye, hand, heart, or feeble tongue,
Disquieted. For there was ever strong
The will upon me so to haste my steps
That I, ere thou be passed, might have of thee
New leasing,—I who else had been forlorn.
I find thee, whom the elfins had decried
As aged, and behold, thy maiden youth!

*Oft to my steps how has there fallen the night,
Pressing upon me! Not the form of fears,
Nor that which lets red courage from the veins,
Or slackens them with sloth; but some veiled sense
Of loneliness that shrouded me in self,
Leaving unfruitful the old impulsive dream.*

My strength of limb that wears the lowland
shade,
My power of wing to triumph on the steep,
My heart whose mastery in virtue is
My sole achievement, shall thy courage be,
And thy defense. And in thy strength is mine.
For manly strength, so valiant if for thee,
Is weakness if it nurture but itself.
And once I feared all weary days to pass
A being alone, a pilgrim, eremite,
Doubting the twilight, foot among the thorns,

The lonely nook embracing, grief at heart.
Yet He that formed me sent me on thy quest,
That could not fruitless be. And I am here,
To help thee wisely to immortal fields.

*There is a kingdom in thy brow! That I
Be queen, hope's brave good wish, seems far and
steep
To striving. Let me look, and smile to thee,
And dare!—A star-beam glimmers on the cloud!*

Thy vision is in light, and truth is thine:
My vision is of thee, for I am Love.
I see that light but as it garments thee,
And brighter could not see it on the cloud.
O sweet and fair, on thee alone I look,
So sharing now thy immortality.

*What mean the fair chaste chiseling, body and
limb;
Fire on the altar that so wistfully burns,
Only thou bending; dew-drunken morning's wealth,
In nectared cups, if time's too-thirsting sun
Alone may drink thereof? It is for thee.
How dare the spirit aspire, thou not entreating?
I, till this hour, a wraith in shadows seemed.*

A spirit, and all immortal!

If for thee!

Then, immortality a proven peace
Affirms; to me its promise crimsoned new,
And from the same unfailing fountains fed,—
Thy heart, whose wine of passion roses o'er
Thy vermeil cheek. 'Tis how I knew thee Life.
For first I saw, far down the gloomy steep,
A maiden, whom if one mistake for thee
She shall to early sorrow bring his lips.
Less fair than thou, she still the fairest is
Of all her train, the siren-throated crew.
Her name is Pleasure. She to some is Life—
Until one takes, and lo, untimely Death!
Her voice I heard, but not into my soul
Her charm it sent; for I was on the steep,
My feet like hind's feet planted.

And I saw

*Whom some think Love. He came as one from
out
The useless riffraff of the street, fire-fanged
With lust; drew to the shadows, and his voice
Sang out a heavy note, that held its charm,
Yet could not drown its own deep misery.
His voice was tuned for Inexperience.
But to his hurt, and my amazement, then
Came wan and loathly Sin vested in shame.
At wafture of her hand, the Graces fled
That wait upon the soul; withdrawing wept,
And since to me a mist veils all that glory.
'Twas Sensuality; and she that heeds
Will bead the grass with tears.*

To Pleasure he
Some dusky servant is, the more condemned.
I found me then far on the pilgrim path
Or ere another met me, who a' while
Might seem to please one in his search of thee.
As Pleasure quite as fair, yet not her youth;
Who nor a maiden nor a virgin seemed,
And yet sedately walked as I drew near,
And with a far-off look. My eye was not,
As when with Pleasure, on her limbs, but on
Her, tightly closing palms. They seemed to bear
One golden seal, the other bleeding hearts,
Fresh gathered from the fields. I quickly knew
I looked on Gain, and wealth or fame her dower;
The brighter gold of human worth, or else
Our bruised hearts her toll. I neither sought,
And keep ambition sacrosanct in love,
Or seek a fame that hath true valor in't.

*He whom I next upon low levels met
Close-frocked and groomed in somber colors stood.
No gift or Grace that passed before him had
More than his passing glance. He sweetly piped,
As 'twere his pleasure to, and strangely bore
A smile that vanished inward. And his eye
Appeared to gather of my harvest here,
As if by some rude gleaner in his look,
And offered naught in turn. His music seemed
More meant to gather up its echoes than
To treasure forth its strains. I hasted on,
Well knowing Self-Love, and not thee, O Love,
Eluded.*

Less like thee was whom I next
Encountered than Self-Love is like to me;
Yet sweeter none, in her pretended grace.
She stood aloof from many in her train,
By polished manner and a charm of mind
Supreme. Her dress the drapery of dreams,
Outwrought by toil and time and treasure, wove
A witchery of wonder round her limbs.
She gathered to herself those of like charm,
And in exclusive virtue veiled her soul.
Yet veils and draperies, dragnets of vice
As often may be found. And polished form
Assures no soundness of the heart within.
I doubted not her worth, and valued much
Her apprehension of the laws of self,
The mysteries of nature, and the thoughts
Of those rare spirits who have tasted life.
She too had tasted of that other fruit
Beside the Tree of Life. Therein I knew
That Culture she is named, and less than Life.
Yet some have thought her dearer than art thou.

*I marvel that so fair are those who came
To barrier thy path. Not so were they,
Except in strength, who met me.*

Strength appeals
To Life, and witchery to Love. And too,
Thou seest with clearer vision than may I.

*The more my wonder then that so beset
Was I of him who next my steps detained.*

*For where the sunset gold thro' forest green
Stirred admiration for delightful earth,
There, on a lonely path to bosky shades,
Stood one I feared me much to look upon.
His face was stern, and in his eye the shade
Of moss and not of sunset had repose.
And for that I in rapture of the day,
Leaving such benedictions to our toil,
Stood mutely by, I heard upon his path
A voice in cynic comment. Then I turned
To look on where some fairies from a grove
Came dancing, and for this had more rebuke.
I sternly bade him go, and felt the dance
Was marred for every fairy on that night,
Tho' neatly tripping to the full-orbed moon.
For Jealousy had left some bitter thing
Pervasive. This we knew; and then not far
We heard the night-owl's baby cry, that seemed
Low-murmured from the grave. Oh, may I not
His path re-enter! In my dreams I saw
The arrow quivering from the leafy wood;
Thro' dismal night resurgent clamor rose
Like storm-notes on the din of battle. They
Who take his path have their thorn-fillets of pain.*

Yet many think his path must keep with mine!
I grieve me in my joy, that thou hast looked
Upon his face and known. Forever free
Our steps shall keep hereafter of such pain.
Quite other was the one whom now I met,
None lovelier save thou. I found her not
Where birds were singing and the gurgling rill

Ran laughing in its gladness to the sea.
Nor, either, in the marts of trade, where most
Her counsels of perfection should have place.
But in a wayside shrine, where with her sat
A company, in light with her elect.
Within a hue of sanctity pervades,
As full of sweet and solemn mystery
As purple evening, growing into night,
Seen thro' some chapel bays. Her ways I knew
To be of highest good. Those with her keep
A plain sweet seriousness of life. And I,
With mellowing spirit in her mystic fanes,
Could gladly rest me from pursuing care.
I thought to tarry till she dedicate
My steps to follow fleetly in her train;
And this was too her pleading. But the few
Who meekly walk a saintly way with her
Would not that they should follow whither I
Must lead; and tho' my steps she would attend,
They still detained her with unanswered need.
Her name Religion—lovelier that she is
So oft restrained, and kept by men apart,
Till oft in lily whiteness she appears
A delicate spirit, pent in cloven pine
Until less puissant than thou for me.

*Her touch thy spirit hath quickened. For I knew
The frequent path, and sometimes found my way
Would open only if unto her shrine.*

'Tis well; for chastened so, thy spirit prevails
To test in courage mine.

Love and Life

*Hath she alone,
Of whom we met, the help of each so wrought?
Or was it there alone our paths have met,
Until we found us here?*

None other could
Have given that which she so fitly gave.
Nor could another have so well misled
To thinking of our quest as satisfied
Ere ended.

*Even so. For pilgrim feet
She has a cleansing, and a soothing rest.*

But rest is not well earned until it lie
Beyond the utmost limits of ascent;
Not in the toilsome purlieus of this mount
Delectable.

*'Tis true; and I have cared
Rather to have the peace in effort here,
Than here a peace. Nor could I with content
Attend his pleadings whom I last had met.
'Twas when in meditation I had turned
From where the altar with its mysteries
Is glowing, that one came and called to me
In voice none could think thine. Anear he stood,
All drear and sad, yet with a touching grace,
As boughs that sway in winter's sleety storm.
Yet was he not in his appearing cold,
But rather as if melting to the sun,*

*With trickling eye that tears can not forget,
Till dews of mercy shall be clean forspent.
His name is Pity; and 'twere pity too
If one should ever fondly think him Love.*

How wisely chosen, to have slipped a path
Which leads to ever deepening gloom.

*It is
With face to shadow, and with downcast look,
That he calls one to go. I rather chose
A brighter path, with no less wonder led,
That bares my face in rapture unto these
Dawn-breathing sympathies of God. How could
One walk with Pity, and yet dwell in light?*

The dangers are well past. The by-paths call
No further welcome to uncertain steps.
The summits may have perils to attend
Our coming, but together we shall stand
In joyous undismay. 'Twere peril if
Our perils failed us. For if virtue be
The crown for which our souls in valor strive,
We gain it only by unwearied care.
Such girth of girded life have we of God,
We ask no easing up of pain, nor light
That smites the shadows into pallid gray,
Where even specters plead not to appear.

*No; virtue is not ever one with those
Imperfect virtues that sit dumbly bound*

Love and Life

*In still imprisoned souls. Tho' weak as yet
In inexperience, I hold my youth
As meant for struggle, and for victory.*

Our earth is yet in youth, and what shall be
The body colors of the autumn forest?
Its fruitage and its garnerings of wealth
Draw on our vision till the vast unseen
Becomes the moving impulse to our thought,
And quickens time to find a rare delight
In blest anticipation. First, we see
Aurora, rosy fingered, dropping dew
Of jeweled gladness; then, her blush to greet
Hyperion's coming; now, in robes arrayed
Of such celestial brightness as becomes
Who takes with him the chariot of the day.
And evening twilight shall her charms reveal
In undiminished beauty. This to me,
And this of youth to what some say is age,
Is prophecy of thy unfailing grace.

*Since hope is my unfailing staff, I dare
To lean upon it now. Let it not fail,
Thy fancy, Love, has form. At least in me
Thou hast what Heaven ordains us all of Life.*

The whispered *Yes* that seals in deathless vow
Companion spirits in their happy quest,
Is this thou gavest first; and it shall be
A bond not loosened till Orion's bands
Are snapped in dissolution of the worlds.
For thou shalt find that Love is not as some

Too fleshly loves that seem so radiant, then
Are like some star-plunge, burnt out in its flare.

Whither our steps?

Right on, till we may find
Some new evangel in the wayside rose;
Some blest appointment in the paths of toil;
The rapturous moment when we two shall gain
A vision of the summit, and shall find
The Spirit of Delight, to earth unknown,
Whatever be the gladness he hath lent.
There Beauty too, and Wisdom, shall with us
Find their unfolding, in reward of those
Whose passion an immortal thirst awoke,
And not to mocking of a vain attempt.
Who gain the heights are sure. They then may
quit
The toils and shadows of the steep ascent,
Which here their perils, and which there their
gain,
Attest. Their suns will bathe in summer seas.
And therefore let us on, till we attain
The sapphire pavements of His feet.

And then?

Thy heavenly largess be my ampler sphere!

1904

LOVE REFLECTING

How rare to earth is a perfect love!
Tho' some have thought they knew it well,
And some have stumbled into hell
Believing they the treasure-trove
Had found the key to, and the road
Had chosen, in the grace of God.

But we have found, dear love, 'tis true,
As these few passing years have shown,
That wealth and wonder—this is known;
But why to us when to so few?
Have I by chance, hast thou by worth
Attained this jeweled prize of earth?

1915

NEARING THE DAWN

From within the shadows, come
To the light around, above;
There thy lurking ills are,—some
Strive, but thrive not, where is Love:
Come thou, come then, come away.

Here on moonbeam, ray of star,
Joy weaves thro' the sable night
Threads of noons that flash afar,
Till is woven morning's light:
Come thou, come then, come away.

Forms of fear are shadows, so
Sorrow, death, are shadows too;
Love was ne'er a shadow, no,
Love is dawn—come, Life, and woo:
Come thou, come then, come away.

1910

COMPENSATION

As saith any worker in art:

My work is hand and heart and brain
Concentred in some talent's trade;
I care for ease, but more would fain
Care if life pays or is but paid.

Not wise was youth, but wisdom lent
Somehow a saving gleam that told
What paths were gain. Yet some have spent
A heart's red blood for yellow gold.

Content is where strict virtues twine
To amaranth. Content is rude
That palsies struggle, spills the wine
Of sacrifice. I will not brood

How, in the tread where Fortune slips,
The worthy drudge who bears the hod
Has gold, while leaden care seals lips
That hold the oracles of God.

The forms that thrid the maze of strife
To seek bread from this iron age,
In pain teach how the means to life
Is in the work and not the wage.

The wage is but the victor's toll,
The wage the victim's glint of praise;
The wage refines thy clay, O soul:
Thy work is virtue's golden days.

The captains of the mill and mart
Leave me, when crowned among their dead,
My Captain Seer who throned His heart,
Less anxious where to lay His head.

Where spirit keeps, lo, trust the cruse;
When close with Thought, Thrift will not
 urge:
And Art's first law is, Wiselier use
Of Fortune's pipes than Mammon's dirge.

The Muses keep from those removed
Who quench their fires in lust of things:
They slight rewards, but him have loved,
And love, who in their passion sings.

My work is hand and heart and brain
Concentred in my talent's trade.
My living scant? Still, be my gain
In this—a princelier life is made.

1907

THE PROTAGONIST

His life was in our later age,
He walked the streets of common care,
Drew courage to him from the Height,
Looked that his talents should engage
His vision thither; and he would dare

To wish but that his steps were right,
Make sure that wisdom led, and then
He questioned not or soon or late
The world's approval: his the sight
That knew the world is adjudged to men.

He took no path that seemeth great
To youth in flush of conscious pride;
But chose a way of use, whose hour
But grew to Fame—who opes the gate
To worth that lives from a worth that died,—

In manhood's patient prime of power.
Life's autumn called: he reasoned why
The age bore summer's fruitful sign,—
His years the seed. He knew the flower
From earth, and equally from the sky,

Springs up; that sun and soil combine
To give it life:—and not alone
May man grow from the sordid earth,
But bears a spirit that stars refine;
Else, as a pagan, he bows to stone.

The gifts of Fortune at his birth
He took, and with them ably wrought
A higher good, with time and stress.
He knew our human woe is dearth
In heart, not purse; and for one he sought

"To waste no manhood on success." *
But made the two a single goal;
And while the cries of gain were rife
He chose—the larger happiness—
O'er flesh a triumph of princely soul.

He let Tomorrow govern life,
Not Yesterday; nor would implore
The passing moments, for they haste,
To give what fools get, care for strife,—
So briefly dominant, then no more.

The earth held beauty: he would taste
Of this, in nature and in art;
Its garden ready to his mind
Stood yielding truth. And he had placed
The sword and cherubim at his heart.

The earth held error: he would find
Some field of tourney with the foe,
Nor let it bear his courage down.
If error thrived, he was not blind
To how the stars in their courses go.

* Sidney Lanier.

Where virtuous conflict held a crown,
He took it with a lineal hand:
Achievement was his legacy.
Did time delay, or custom frown,—
His soul moved under a just command.

He did not think that man will die
To where he must his standard furl:
He struggled here, and he would stand
In braver planet—fit to try
The streets of amethyst and of pearl.

1905

THE BEAUTIFUL

Beauty of form is a beauty sublime,
Beauty of face is a treasure of time,
Manner, and deed, and one's dwelling are three
In which all of beauty may always agree:
But of all that in which beauty combines,
Beauty of soul in its glory outshines.

Beauty of form has each flake of the snows,
Beauty of face have the lily and rose,
Beauty of dwelling have the stars of the sky,
Manner and deed have the beast that will die:
But all of these dwell with that beauty of spirit
That dwells in the palace my soul doth inherit.
1917

NE CEDE MALIS

Pure as a drop of the summer's dew
That clings to the lips of a rose;
Rapt in a fancy the rose was true
As swiftly back to the sun it goes:
So shall my fond affection be
That one bright hour was kissed by thee.

Glad as the song of the hermit thrush
That sweetens the breath of a dawn;
Lovelier then that perchance the hush
Of noon may find its wonder gone:
So shall the joy of my heart appear
In this, that once you chose to hear.

Free as the billow of dashing spray
As wildly it breaks on the rock;
Freer that now the spent wave may
With sea commingle after the shock:
So shall my broken hope the wave
Return to, saying, "What joy she gave!"

1916

THE SINGLE EYE

Often have I envied him
Who from day to day
Does one thing, and with a vim
Keeps a steadfast way:
Never in a strait 'twixt two,
Doubting what were best to do.

Such a one will ever find
This beatitude,—
That there will not come to mind
Some distraction rude:
Be his effort great or small,
It commands him, heart and all.

'Tis a blessing Fortune fails
To have sent to me.
One who lives in quiet dales
May not rove the sea:
But his mind no prison keeps,
And may venture vasty deeps.

Training set, and liking chose,
Me the shepherd's lot.
Only he who finds it knows
Half the pleasures got.
But a call is in the blood
All too strong, if understood.

To admit of that content,
Gladly held my own:
'Tis a fire will not be pent
Long within the bone.
When I muse it burns, and lo,
Come the Muses tripping so

I have not the single eye!
Leaving then the flock,
I must watch them dancing by,
All unveiled of smock:
Double-minded man, says James,—
But the saints should not call names.

He that finds within the brain
Talents that to use
Are his profit, he would fain
Look not to excuse,
By the worth of what is near,
His neglect of aught more dear.

Others may not care a whit
That within the green
Bosky dale here I may sit,
Sing, have sung, unseen:
They may think but of the fleece,
While my harp I thrum in peace.

And yet, truly, I must feel
Something has been lost

To the shepherd,—'tis the seal,
Ever, of the cost
That attends the wider path
Than the easy-goer hath.

Just as truly know I well
There is something won;
What it is but time can tell:
It was not begun
Just to while a summer's day,—
Passion 'tis dies not away.

Many voices are there will
Just for gain be heard;
Praise be stayed, their harps are still,
And their souls unstirred.
They are sold out for a song
Who can heed their music long.

Men may hear, or men forbear,
I have joy to sing;
And a chance that some will care,
If some word I bring
That may to their eyes impart
Visions that awoke my heart.

1916

FLOWER CARES

Said the Daffodils:

Tulips, O early flame, let us go roaming,
Searching for Lilies—ah, where in the gloaming?
Sweet William's faring forth, motley dress—silly!
Poppies seem nothing worth—he'll pick a Lily.

Said the Tulips:

O ho! complaining so, Daffydownhillies?
Lilies will have their Wills, Williams their Lilies!
She with thy fairness—should youth want mint
 juleps?
He that has fire i' the blood, had it of Tulips!
1909

THE BUTTERFLY MAIDEN

If a butterfly should flutter by
My lady walking on the street,
And see her wings—what pretty things
She lightly trips along with, sweet,—
I well know why that butterfly
Would surely think an angel she
From other world, and with wings furled
Would softly sigh, "What chance for me!"

If a certain tony father's 'phone
Should ring, and sweetly that same maid
Should say to him, "I have a whim,
My dear papa,—so please have paid
One sepia tone, one sapphire stone,
A rope of pearls—is all, you see?"
Her loving sire would curb his ire,
But sadly say, "What chance for me!"

If I therefore, who love her more
Than elf e'er loved a fairy, come
From out the wold, in times of old,
Should find, alas! tomorrow some
Poor singer o'er from Singapore,
Who had some feature "cute" to see,—
I, who am loved, would then be moved
To say, "My turn; what chance for me!"

1907

IN THE PRIMROSE PATH

Mine the god, Hilarity!
He shall have a guest in me
While his cups remain to drink;
He my pleasures will combine
As I pledge him oft in wine,
And should he at last resign,—
I'll pause—and think.

No thought yet doth seam the brow,
No need yet to question how
Heart's wine mingles this I quaff;
If in vain I supplicate
Wiser gods who, red with fate,
Make my god to abdicate,—
I've had—my laugh.

1908

TO THE COLORS

To fight with beasts at Ephesus, the Muse,
Whom I most love, I quitted for a time.
Mayhap the Muse cared little, tho' my prime
Of effort were so stayed by the abuse,
Or what the deed from dreaming might so lose,
Seen in th' exchange to hustings-prose for rime.
To art it seemed as if it were a crime.
Yet Milton did not hesitate to choose.

Not jealous is the Muse when Liberty,
That warring princess, shall for courage call.
Her will is first: who will for her not all
Lay down, that some poor captive may be free
From such a tyrant, and such agony,
As ever came by this King Alcohol?

1915

FRIENDS AT CHRISTMAS

'Tis a fine old Christmas! And isn't it fine
When one has friends like the friends of mine,
Who have the will, and who know the way,
To add their cheer to the Festal Day?

What a rare Good Will at the Yuletide turns,
As fire on the altar of friendship burns,
To hymn that anthem the angels knew—
The song of a Friend, as mine to you.
1918

THE GARDEN OF LIFE

If spring-time woo to beauty
The rosebud from the stem;
If daffodils to duty
Waken when over them
The first warm winds come blowing,
The secret of whose going
Lies hidden, past the showing
Of sagely theorem;—

If over wires aerial
Come whispers of the mind,
If thought on such ethereal
Sound-waves their course may find;
If to the poet's vision
There comes, by Fate's decision,
The lure of fields elysian,
For which faint souls have pined;—

Why doubt we love's uniting
To life within the soul?
Or think time has no righting
Of wrongs beyond control?
Why fancy prayer wants hearing?
Or doubt our hopes are nearing
Fulfillment, spite of fearing,
Whatever be time's toll?

To me the days most evil
Have still a sunset glow;
Let discords have their revel,
A quiet comes, and lo!
Above all surge of sorrow,
Beyond what dread may borrow,
Between me and my morrow,
Are steps where angels go.

1918

AT THE SEASON'S CONFESSIONAL

*(When brows have silvered, and with hearts still
gold)*

They walk afield, musing:
Nature, greening thy advance,
And retreating thy drear way,
Weaving threads of earlier hues
With the weft of later gray,—
What the paths thy Graces use?
Or thro' guidance or by chance?

He speaks, questioning:
When the year's ideal days?
Is it when the hawthorn blows
Freshly pure from out the sere,
Typing life? Or when the rose,
To the bluebird's warbling near,
Gladdens many a field with praise?

Is it when the sky from haze
Deepens into fuller blue,
Bringing peace? Or when the blood
Leaps to see the autumn view?
Or in winter's halcyon wood?
When the year's ideal days?

She replies, questioning:

When comes life's ideal days?
Is it when the dreams of youth
Crimson with auroral dawn?
When the early quest of truth
Leads afield? Or on the lawn,
When the lover turns his lays?

Is it when new grace arrays
Cheeks that dim the bridal flowers?
Or when to maternal joys
Gentle songs attend the hours?
Or when age full treasure cloy?
When come life's ideal days?

Answering, he declares:

God of field and forest, Thou
Of the homes and hearts of men,
Answer in the rose, the brier,
In the brow, the breast, and then
In life's true Promethean fire,—
"Love knows but one answer, *Now!*"

1902

WITH AMARANTH

Do they that love, love on, and ever,
Unstayed by time, or change, or chance;
So true in life, death may not sever
The bonds that time could but enhance?
What hope it brings anew
That this my love for you
Shall treasure all of thine since thy first
glance.

Let life on earth be still remembered
(When some new planet we shall learn
To have the joy of),—where Decempered
With winter, here this hearth can burn
With such a rare delight
It gives a love and light
To time,—then for that other time we yearn.

If mind survive beyond the mortal,
If what we gain in virtue live;
If spirits enter thro' the portal
When dust to dust again we give:
Then that which was our best,
And fashioned well the rest,
Shall not at last from them be fugitive.

1918

A READING OF THE LIFE INDEED

"These are written, that ye may believe."—John

Reading? Yes, and thro' the pages
Etching Face that learning's ages
Find no like of. For the gloss of
This account conceals no loss of
Rare design and richer tracings.
Doubt was here, and Doubt's defacings
Mar the page. Yet some veneering,
Penciled thro', as Doubt were nearing
Acid-touch he thought were spoiler,
Helps. For see, had Love been toiler,
Only Love, he, awed by nearness,
Would have failed of perfect clearness.
Now the glass of time is bitten
With iridian glory. Smitten,
Doubt recoils,—takes pallor duly:
Faith, tho' darkly, yet sees truly.

Face of Friend, whose fortune's favor
Brings marred page of truth to savor
Of a wholeness, soundness, boldness
That so scathes a heart of coldness.
Scathes? Yea, warmth of this affection
Leaves not scathless thought's direction
That leads, thoughtless, to the losing
Of a light that grows with using.

I have looked, yea, I have lingered
O'er that Face; see, I have fingered
Page of miracle and healing;
Where the woes flash, where His feeling
Ran, blood-oozing, to the wearied;
Where He answered, where He queried
Doubt's desire and Faith's unreason;
Page where patience, out of season,
Blighted fig-leaved Pharisee,
Stilled wave-snarling Galilee;
Page where every thought is human,—
Strength of man or love of woman
Alternating deed and speech;
Page where so beyond their reach
Word or doing had such rising
To our need, their thin disguising
Of the fleshly failed, nay, veiled Him
God in Christ—as they who nailed Him
To the cross found. Here is written
All of life; and here is smitten
Sleep of death with waking glory
Of the life indeed. The story
Stays—ah yes, but to our waiting
Love with life has truer mating.

Ever seen Him? Nay. Or known Him?
Nay, not truly. Yet I own Him
Brother of my blood, and even
Thro' His blood my Priest in heaven.

Here, not there, I look to find me
All of life that could remind me

How the pilgrim, a sojourner,
May of life be more the learner
Than who seeks for self, forgetting
Self-love is the soul's outletting.
Here is One who giving fully
Thought and love may teach us truly
How the flesh and how the spirit
May all gains lead on to merit.

His the reddest blood I know,
His the whiter life than snow;
His the deepest agony,
Turned to largest victory;
His the melting with warm tears
Hearts that sin had chilled with fears;
His the breath of spring-time, planting,
And of harvest,—to us granting
In brief years the view, in measure,
Of what life is, what its treasure.

To the kingly from the clod
He is Man; and He is God
From the width of heaven's span
To the limits of a man.
Who is wise to know the scission
Has no human gift of vision;
Who can idly shift the proving
Has not felt the lure of loving.

Such as I? Once He was doing
Things I long have been pursuing.

Only such as I? The test is,
His the true light where my best is
Light's refraction. When most lowly,
We but rise to whisper, "Holy!"

"Chief among ten thousand!" Preacher,
Poet, prophet, sage, or teacher:—
Was there ever one that living
Measured life as He by giving?
Or that dying gave full measure
Unto death, of richer treasure?
In His birth the angels hailed Him,
In His death the Father veiled Him
From His face. The cup He tasted
For each man; and then He wasted
Death with resurrection splendor,—
Glory bathed in such a tender
"Mary," that she left her weeping,
Ever hence to have in keeping
Glimpse of that new artistry
That to death's vale hung morning sky.

"Peter—tell him"; "Thomas, prove Me";
"Cleopas, search"; and, "Children, love Me":—
Forty days of such inlacing
Of the east with golden tracing
On the clouds, that all had feeling
Here was dawn that came with healing
In his wings. Clouds then receiving
Him their Daystar brought, not grieving,

But new vision of the golden
Streetered city, yet withholden
Till they, in their night's bereavement,
Should attain, by faith's achievement.
Purple-shadowed Olivet
Can but tell His people yet,
Charm of His philosophy
Outleaps earth into the sky.

"These are written—" Thanks, O Christ,
Thanks to each evangelist!
Here in love and truth are meeting
Such four lips, and in such greeting,
That not even Thy archangel
Could have voiced a like evangel.
One has had Thy two-fold vision;
One is yet our heart's physician;
One on Peter straightway followed;
One old custom wormed and hollowed.
Theirs are words of Thee completed;
Theirs are deeds, with Thee repeated.

1911

AN IRRATIONALITY

If God be made of human thought,
And they that made Him (crass and crude),
Knew what themselves, all mortal wrought,—
How One immortal and all good
Grew from such mind, or will, or heart:
Who planted there that gentle art?

Yet there be those who say that He
Had fashion thus, and say that sin
So burdened life that, sinners, we
Created One to make us clean.
The creature that so formed his God
Might, in good form, have quenched the
clod.

If Reason, joined with Conscience, gave
Such Spirit to mere matter's source;
Shall Reason and hurt Conscience crave
To still that Life, in their divorce?
Would not such Deity reprove
That union's lapse from holy love?

1910

TWO RABBIS

Two rabbis,—so the legend says,—
Upon Mount Zion stood, when lo!
A fox ran by. "Alas, the days
Of glory we can never know!"
So spake the one, untutored still
To find the hidden paths that show
The secret of His will.

The other smiled, and, "Pray, why weep,
My brother, at so cheering sight?"
"I weep to know His judgments keep
Such vigil, in our Zion's night:
For so the prophet* has foretold
This very shame. Have you delight
In spoil of Israel's fold?"

"I laugh to see His promise true.
For if in judgment, as we see,
With such exacting sorrow too,
Then so it shall in mercies be.
For Israel's greater glory lies
Beyond the seeming mystery
That darkens now our eyes."

1918

* Lam. V, 18.

CHRISTMAS EVE

I

Were the sainted choirs that be
Bright in spotless purity,—
They of virgin innocence,
Charactered by proven sense,—
Now to quire earth's sable night
With their harps, in glories dight,
As Judaeon shepherds' ears,
Heard what faintly earth now hears:
Would not our harsh notes refine
To a whisper, "Praise be Thine"?

If the temple's glory shone
With a light not hither known,
As a Babe thro' hallowed aisles
Cleansed what even babe defiles;
While a wondering people saw
One investing him with law,
As to life his truth and way;
Would not Faith exulting say,
"Thanks, that I thy coming see";
Love confirming, "This is He"?

Should the Magi from the east,
Hoar from learning's winter feast,

Come confessing now as then,
"Wisdom makes not guiltless men";
Saying while they Him adore,
"Hearts want love as minds want lore;
Lore is mighty east or west,
Love, tho' lowly found, is best":
Would not our philosophies
Bare their burdens to the skies?

And if now the Magi's star
Troubled Herod, bared the scar
Of his frailty, shamed our trust
In a scepter that should rust;
Till his vice, in malice spent,
Harvested its discontent,—
Ramah's mourning Rachels bowed,
To see each cradle turn a shroud:
Would not God of us receive
Thanks that joy crowns Christmas Eve?

Or if Nazareth, forspent,
Formed our ill environment;
And within its meager life
Boyhood grew to manly strife,
Manhood rending custom, creeds,—
Balming hearts while folly bleeds,—
Till attaining to His throne,
His a world who was alone:
Would not we His virtue prove
Was of God by our pure love?

II

Christmas Eve! And lo, our night
Mingles with the Easter light.
Angel voices yet acclaim,
Suppliants hail the Infant Name;
Culture still the Magi guides,
Love a Herod still derides;
Till what they bestowed on death
Is made spirit by His breath,
Till what they tradition gave
Creeps into its charnel-cave.

Bethlehem and Olivet!
Cornerstone to minaret
Lies the temple Love sufficed
Richly to upbuild in Christ.
For living stones, now built within,
A scarlet thread atones for sin.
All His manhood is at strife
With thy languor. In thy life
Why sits Doubt, a pensive wraith,
Where should be His throne of Faith?

1909.

THE CHRISTMAS CHOIR

The Christmas Choir, were we of them,
Would not have sung near Bethlehem
To shepherds lowly, while they grazed
Their flocks near by; till all amazed
The keepers, seated on the ground,
With wonder heard the festive sound
Of sweetly quiring Cherubim,
And joined in praises unto Him.

The Christmas Choir, were we of them,
Had sung in proud Jerusalem
Some vesper choral, while agog
The pride of all the Synagogue
Stood waiting, till with adulation
They might have made the celebration
Attract Great Herod from his throne
To name the Choir his very own.

Not of the "Glory in the Highest,"
But for the glory that was highest;
Not of "good will to contrite men
In whom He is well pleased"; but then
Of Herod's pleasure to invite
The Three Wise Men to come that night,
With gold and myrrh and frankincense,
To make the Choir full recompense.

"RED OF THE DAWN"

The beauty of the kindled east,
When first the red of morning burns
With incense of beatitude,—
The while for us her votive priest
Renews the hope that in us yearns,—
Compels the thought, until it turns
To worship of the Source of good.

But brighter than this glory is
The dawn of rapture in the soul;
When light and gladness flame anew
With rays that tokens are of His
New day, wherein the sweet control
Of being centers in the whole
And only counsel that is true.

Brighter with red of dawn shall be
The radiant coming of the King,
Lurid with judgment from His throne;
Brightest with peace to those who see
The realms of beauty He will bring,
Which over seas and land will cling,
To grace the kingdom of His own.

1918

THE SETTING OF THE PLAY

Had I my will of time and place
For love and love's delights, I show
How well the choice.—But first thy face,
O dearest one, it were, you know:

For were that wanting, place and time
Were landscape only, fair but lone;
Or lyric verse from which the rhyme
Is taken, read and briefly known.

But with thy face, O near and true,
Let summer evenings laugh to me
In woodland pastures where the view,
By babbling brook and caroling tree,

Dissolving is of knoll and dell,
Of glen and lea, of bosk and green;
And with each view a tale to tell
Of joy that is and oft has been.

There golden suns that warm the west
With colors, thro' the cooling air
Will well their glories in the best
Of scenes infuse,—a charm so rare

That one regret can come to heart:
'Tis that the time, which from the place
So quick withdrawing, may its part
Of such converging joys efface;

Else from the place and time there will
A face be taken.—Dearest, this
The bittersweet of fancy.—Still,
That chance now stays, this better is.

1912

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

The devil knows I, half the time,
With open hand his bidding do;
That with a bent and skill for crime
I play the serpent in the slime,
Whose venom in me virtue slew.

And Goodness knows that never half,
Nor any, judged by stricter rule,
Have I walked sanely with the staff
Of honor, but have made to laugh
The demons that made me their fool.

And I, I can but know full well,
Tho' vice as virtue may appear,
Yet not as virtue will vice tell
When I am plunged in lowest hell,
To start again a life sincere.

For all deceit deceives him most
Who at the highway's turn the way
That seemeth right pursues, till lost
In labyrinth where soon the cost
Of error stands to those who stray.

And I who know the form of life
That stands approved, and is one's best,
Know not its peace. To me its strife
Lays hold on torment, and is rife
With fears for much beyond arrest.

I am self-damn'd as Mr. Hyde,
Whoever thinks me Dr. Jekyll.
To me their blindness brings no pride,
To me the very fiends deride
My horror that can spell but *tekél*.

1915

MIRTH

Mirth, why hast thou gone from me?
Rarely one shall love thee more:
And tho' rarely thou of yore
Camest, none with greater glee
Called thee welcome. O the days
When youth's comrades drew with thee
Near to urge thee in thy ways:
Leisure, labor, both alike
Ready when the time should strike,
Just to show how well it pays
To attend thee. They have gone,
Thou not with them. And where then?
Much the homes and hearts of men
I am called to. Seldom on
Are thy laughers. Pain has birth,
Sin and sadness, these anon,—
But not thou, O rarest Mirth!
Work and wisdom, I am told,
Are to thee as gates of gold,—
Thou'lt not enter. If the earth
Could be reinhabited,—
Purged of every fay and sprite,
Elf and goblin, in a night,
Good alike the evil dead,—
But thee multiplied and grown
All that poets of thee said,

Love and Life

All that youth has of thee known,
All that love for thee has dared,
All that life for thee has cared,—
How the earth with light were sown!

1913

OUR WORKADAY WORLD

Wealth I wish, and I love ease,
Fame I would be striving after,
Health I joy in, sky and seas
Have delight of, and of laughter.
But my chief of human pleasure
Is just work, in wisdom's measure.

"Adam's curse"? When God to him
Gave of fruit and flower the culture?
Devil take the ease *his* whim
To man's virtue set as vulture!
If our work be melancholy,
We have shared in Adam's folly.

"Hitherto"—attend the word,—
"Hath my Father worked. Till even
'Tis my meat. And I have stirred
Zeal on earth: for in His heaven
They that praise before His throne
Work-songs first on earth have sown."

1911

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

On His Retiring from the Presidency

Blest people they—
God is their stay—
Who when ill hours forebode of grief,
With Fortune may strike hands,
And find that one commands
Who of blood-royal worth is honor's Chief.

When the accurst
Of men, that worst
Of treason's crimes in crimson spelt;
Bowed by McKinley's death,
Men said with bated breath,
"The noon of glory welcomes Roosevelt."

Their words were just:
'Tis glory must
The prelude form of fitting praise.
On that white noon true fame
Abode. And yet, who came
Set juster age on those Saturnian days.

Where Truth has warred
Some peace is marred,
That from His throne chance may not cease.
The scepter should depart
Not till this nation's heart,
Lust-leprosied for gold, were cleansed for
peace.

So to the fray,
In restless way,
Rare strength he in twelve labors spent;
Just cause, amazing zeal,
Success in each appeal,
Made him, in glory's right, war President.

While most acclaimed,
Some loudly blamed,
Oppugned their shrift, and thought to feed
On Mammon's treasures
Him of the centuries,
Whose message rifles every vault of greed.

The powers that prey
To Greed, would sway
One whose just zeal was last as first;
Fought from the open field,
Their caverned haunts revealed
The beasts of Ephesus. Who loosed, fared
worst.

Just friend to wealth,
And equal health
To whom the wrongs of wealth were felt;
Hope to well-meaning men,
To others fear. Worth then,
Where kith makes kingly, crowned our
Roosevelt.

Each class, all creeds,
Each race, his deeds
Found, or shall find, live virtue spent;

In time the owl-eyed seers
May learn, from vanished fears,
A wholesome, manly, moral strength he lent.

The party whip,
Preferment's tip,
That small men think the crack of doom;
For this he little cared,
And knew, while that he warred
For righteousness, that Fame bequeaths to
whom

The people love.
He knew to prove
The title his, and chose by valiant strife—
By fearless act, and word
That widely ruled or stirred
The age—to rest authority in life.

And as he ruled
Who first was schooled
To know what makes plenipotent
The scepter: so, above
Men's blame, the larger love
He strove for, gained, shall keep, forms his
content.

Thanks he lays down
The sovran crown,—
Not such as cravens wished and feared
For Cæsar's worthy brow;
But tsar-in-waiting now
To our co-regent state like men upreared.

Why at the last
Alone? Our past
Of valor bares to virtue's crown;
His yesterday hath won
"Servant of God, well done!"—
Tomorrow let new wreaths of just renown

Attain his brow.
If to such *Now*
He brings new gain, adds Pisgah's peak
To Sinai—vision clear
To righteousness, brings near
The fields of promise—Hail! Who sees,
bids seek.

And best, that noon
Lights him—not soon
To fall. Years urge his voice and pen.
Hail, Chief! not less that hence,
Should not reaction thence
Recall, thou shalt adorn plain citizen.

With us abide,
Thy counsels guide
Our wish thro' regal coming years;
Live, or in peace or strife,
Our royal common life,—
First named, first heard, first loved of all
thy peers!

1908

THE TITANIC

Went down April 15, 1912

Titanic seemed the skill of man,
As thro' the seas the vessel ran.

Wealth, fame, and love that night were stirred
To praise what Craft called man's last word.

The deep was gentle—not once dared
To boast a triumph often shared.

The sky as gently looked upon
The proud Sea-Titan pulsing on.

The air too said, "My unseen wires
Now wait man's touch that never tires."

Air, sky, and sea alike agreed
With man to say, "Hail, God of Speed!"

One voice was wanting from that choir:
For Fate then nursed a heart of fire,

And let her icy fingers feel
Their touch of death along the keel.

To her mate, Frost, "Aha! a plot
Have we, and man—he dreams it not!

Let thought-transference lease the air,
Yet few tonight my wrath shall spare.

Tho' on midnight this Titan loom,
I have set here Titanic doom:

That man may know his feeble breath
Can voice no triumph over death."

1912

"CINCINNATI, MY HAPPY HOME"

Apropos of a Slogan

Smoke and grime from our factories,
Fog and mist from river and skies,
Crowned with a wreath of circling hills,
With an atmosphere of vats and stills,
Fed from farms of a shifting loam,
Is Cincinnati, My Happy Home.

The years draw near to the century
Since one grandsire on his horse rode by;
What time, in the near Miami wood,
The cabin home of the other stood.
Both from the east had hither come;
And both passed on to a western home.

Thro' Hoosier woods they blazed a trail,
And then they heard the cry, "A Sail!"
In schooners, ere war our land had rent,
These prairie pilgrims to Kansas went;
And there, by Osawatomie Brown,
Their Pottawatomie farms sowed down.

Now, after the lapse and chance of time,
'Tis Zinzinnati, Mein Glücklich Heim!
And I feel, so far from my native strand,
As if spewed up in "der Vaterland";
And my Pilgrim blood of the pioneer
Gets superheated in dwelling here.

In Nineveh once young Jonah dwelt,
And Nineveh's sins the prophet felt,
And felt he still had rather roam
Than have such place for his happy home!
God said, "'Tis better than your gourd vine!"
So, Gott helff mir, I will not whine.

1912

TO JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

Among rare men who bless their kind,
What finer gift has God for earth
Than poets, who help us to find,
Beneath our apathy of mind,
The richer veins of human worth?

Seldom the age that has not known
Such rhythmic cause for thankfulness.
Whatever else has rankly grown,
Some poet yet the light has sown
That will that age to others bless.

So rich in all material things
Were we, yet cumbered with the care
Of riches that still take them wings;
That, had we not who sweetly sings
In rarest poetry, our share

In truer wealth had failed us. You,
O poet of the homely store
Of love, of pathos, and the true
Insight to what seems always new
And richer when you tell it o'er,

Breathe not the oracle that dies,
While bards of old Olympus nod;
But you have cleansed our dimming eyes,
And tuned our frettings to the cries
Of wholesome laughter, thanks to God.

And I, on this Thanksgiving Day,
Who all the bards of minstrelsy
Love to the limit of our clay,
Love you, and loving, care to say
How much your voice has been to me.

With poets of the far and near,
Whose melodies across the strings
Sweep so enchantingly, I hear
Thy voice that comes with vibrant cheer
As oft I welcome while it sings.

What finer gift than poets? None;
And tho' the years may bear afar,
Their music like the summer sun
Shall thro' each golden harvest run,
Until we too attain their star.

Too near that day when, "He is gone!"
Shall sound upon our cheerful feast;
But we shall know, when night has drawn
Her curtains here, another dawn
Hath set her pillars in the east.

1915

DEATH

Shall we so cheerily sing of life,
So lightly too shall we sing of love?—
How love is of life the soul's mere breath,
As nerve to muscle, as brawn for strife?—
And yet in a time when its worth we prove,
Shall we so mournfully sing of death?

Death is a flimsily curtained sleep:—
A friend lies there, and we stand in tears
To think we must leave the curtains drawn,
And him so chambered in mystery deep.—
Yet stay! I have seen to that form how nears,
Ashen of feature, a flush of dawn.

He will be waking, well I know,
And rise he will to a sweeter toil,
And gather his fruits and wait his guest,
As I some day to my chamber go,
And curtain from others my lines of moil,—
Body soothed gently to needed rest.
1910

THE AUTUMN ROAD

Fields green with wheat, fields brown with corn,
Here autumn furze, mown meadows old,
Here apples ripe for Plenty's horn,
And woodlands crowned with leafy gold;

By crabbed croft, where purple grapes
Hang waiting on their harvest moon,
In vales which sombre autumn drapes
With charm well worth some western rune;

Thro' farm the dull-hued season sates
With fruits and grain and festive food,
And where, to mock its dullness, mates
With splendor doffed in motley mood.

So from Ohio's citied queen,
Thro' Hoosier fields of vale and wood,
By Egypt's kine, more fat than lean,
Across our inland river's flood,

To one more Babel of the plain;
Then thro' Missouri, mighty state,
Of fertile farms, until I gain
Her other city's golden gate,

Thro' which what multitudes are poured
To fields of fortune, north, south, west,—
Yet find they, while they gain and hoard,
No *ne plus ultra* for their rest.

To me my promised land is gained,
My native air seems passing sweet;
Here stars a former influence rained,—
Old voices, faces, now I greet.

October's wane it is, whose night
Boys strew with pranks of Hallowe'en;
Our car thro' midnight speeds her light,
To close the panoramic scene.

Yet, O sweet Sorrow! all my care
Is at the end, not on the road:—
A dying mother's holy prayer,
As, with All Saints, she meets with God.

1910

OF POESY

Genius of poet is breath of the wind
Taken as spirit in union with mind;
Gleam of the dewdrop, scent of the rose,
Wrath of the storm, and a rhythmic repose;
Pallor of churchyard, flush of the dance,
Key to the Sovereign will, echo of chance;
Tale of the wayside, march on the road,
Contest of dragon, and wrestlings with God.

Realm of the poet is the fire-mist of dawn,
The refuse of matter where science has gone;
Swamp of the firefly, the light-gaoled arc,
The last solar embers that grew of a spark;
The far dusk of Eden, sin, death, and disease,
The gleam of a promise o'er glass-molten seas;
Age of the wood, of the flint, and of gold,
Age outleaping promise your prophet foretold.

Glory of poet is the glory of life
Writ crimson and warm thro' eras of strife;
Glory that wasted, not hoarded, its loves,
Glory of dream that late waking approves;
Fame's meager reward, or Wisdom's, or less,
His alchemy testing your gold's nothingness;
Content with a page whereon he may write,
Your clean page at morning, your marred page
at night.

1910

THE QUESTION

ξυντετάρακταί δ' αἰθὴρ πόντῳ.—Aeschylus.

From cold Olympus thunders Zeus,
Caucasian crag reflects his will,
Where sin is with his lightnings lit;
The vanquished, breathing vengeance still,
Foretells the god his slave will loose.
"The sky is mingled with the deep";
Who knows the awe-compelling voice
That can to us interpret it,
And bring to law fair reason's choice,
And faith that may with reason keep?

1899

AN UNDERSONG OF PROGRESS

The snail is swift in his flight,
The sloth takes wings of the wind:
They haste, as a bird to the mountain's height;
But man,—he lags behind;
With his mouth he bites the dust,
With his wings he beats the sod,
And asks, in his wayward-wandering trust,
“Not yet the hills of God?”

The owl takes pride i' the sun,
The bat in the blue o' the sky:
They sing in delight as the hour-sands run;
But man—his cavern is why—
Laments that the night is long,
Or thinks, Would the sun but awake!
And moans, in despair at his fancied wrong,
“The dawn, when will it break?”

The frost tints the rose-bud's cheek,
The wind o' winter the leaf:
They freshen with strength the plants left bleak;
But man—alack his grief!—
Thinks hard the winter his own,
That life no spring can renew,
And cries to the world, his heart as the stone,
“When will man's love be true?”

1900

FRIAR LAURENCE

To E. C. B.

"Some shall be pardoned and some punished."

Yon sunset sky has now an afterglow.
Look where the light is on the circling hills,
While wreathes of laurel bind their ample brows.
Cloud answers unto hill with maiden grace
As hill exultingly entreats the cloud,
Both held in harmony. So I have seen
Two lovers who with such enchanting ways
Would have infused an equal glory round,
To bless a day cooled as by quickening showers,
Had not the elements enforced a storm
Which bore the tempest on into the night.

This gentler storm is past.—Those rays of light
Seem now to rise as from Verona's streets.
It is not so; they are of fairer gold,
Reflecting love that is not quenched in storm.
—Nature is now at prayer. Day's eye is closed;
See where from lids yon heaven's glory shines.
The lashes tell repose, a breathing comes,
The quiet after vespers of the child
Sweetly enrobed for sleep. Here will we stay
While now the robes of night fall cool upon us,
And list the gentle murmuring of trees,
And share their plenteous, warmly dropping tears.

* * * * *

Whereof I speak?—Yours but a brief and bare
Outline of fact: would know my meanings?—Ah,
My being did with native fervors thrill,
I was responsive to this mind of God,
Did speak of noon and sunset at a breath;
I saw the light and shade together come,
The heat still pressing hard the restful eve;
To me it seemed there came with waft of breeze
The saddened memory of other days.
I felt the smile and heartache of the wood.
—In such a soul-enfolding mood and hour
As this which we, good Friar Jerome, enjoy,
I will impart to you a page of that
Which nigh to fills the volume of my heart.

Three years now softly, sadly thrid the loom
Which weaves the fabric for my elder dream,
Since from Verona's gates I came to dwell
Within the cloister of this woodland garth.
The all-year Lent of meditative days,
Which here are mine, cannot indeed be hard
To one whose life has ever been alone,—
Save when as priest men sought of me those words
That strangely help the soul in stress of doubt,
Or when the children came because they loved—
Perchance the strangeness of the monastery.
Tho' from their joyous footsteps there has gone
All music, save faint strains in memory,
Like those which swayed these leaves at yesternoon,
Philosophy has still her gentle way
To be the blue-veined armor of the soul.
This is my comfort 'gainst that torch-lit night
Whose glamour else would still impeach my face

As then it did, when I had almost laid
With spade and mattock e'en my honor down.

—That was the nightfall: turn back to its day.
Alas, that day! It is oppressive yet
To think on hours essentially so sad.
The heart is desperate, with moods of flame
When passion's embers find the winds of hate.
The desert Arab knows no fierce simoon
Worse than the withering breath of household feud
That brings dread summons to the green and bloom
Of tender loves. Yet this the brazen sky,
The deepening haze, the hot and stifling wind
Of wrath, which rose consuming love's first dawn.
Beneath this siege of sorrow's forcèd breath
Of desperation, love sought out some way
By sylvan footpaths unto quiet bowers,
Such as from Eden Love in memory holds.
Yet little dreamt that love, or deemed the hope
Which thereunto allied wrung from this heart
Its wine of consolation, to be quaffed
By mouths unhallowed from the parchèd earth,
That for these plighted palmers thus to look
For peace, meant first deliverance.—So came
The anxious summons forth life's westward gates
To find—ah, who shall say what shadowy vales,
Or sun-kissed lawns of quietude, there are
For that sad host whom Death has tempted on
To seek an only rest?

To this poor mind,
Love has a mystery no art can solve.
'Tis then as life—perhaps for it is life.
Since death for these, the more my mystery.

If life thro' death, then let me have it so;
For so I sought the shadow and that failed,
I still would cling to some reality.

This Romeo had, most true, a certain loss!
His wisdom failed him—only love did *not*.
His barque dared deeps no helmsman should have
tried,

Those of wild passion, rough more than the seas;
There found his joy as petrels do in storm,—
And when must lose, what seeming fortitude!

She who for him in constancy did hold
A Hero's torch across our Hellespont,
Would not let him alone go down to death;
But having served chaste Venus with full heart,
Made offering then before her special shrine.
Such strength of purpose was there in her love,
That when to keep her honor from the dust
It must be hers whose holy vows were young—
Foot but an hour upon the household flint—
To free the spirit from its feudal tomb,
She bravely dared the deed. Alas! that then,
Too promptly bidding tryst at gates of day,
For Romeo's reckless speed, she missed him there,
And hastened if to find him in the dark.
—It was a soul too precious for such loss.
The sands were golden that slipped thro' the palms
Of our good Friar John. Yet, they are spent;
And golden statues, formed perhaps when cooled,
But made of metal wrought in that fierce heat
Which reddens yet the Guelph and Ghibelline,
Instruct Verona's youth.—Their light we saw,
Or seemed to see, reflected on the cloud,

Before that sunset lightened other hills,
Or ere this woodland sobbed itself to sleep.

* * * *

No, no! Pity me not my banishment.
For once did I to Romeo reckon this
As dear lent mercy, when unto his thought
No guardian angel came, nor dawning broke,
Nor silvery voices cheered a silent night,
Outside Verona.—Broad the world and blest
To whom all life fails not with one spent hope.
It is not exile wooing nature's heart,
Hearing her whisper peace unto my age
That soon will as the twilight quit its cloud.
If there be sadness in a broken spirit,
If tears that fall on every tuft of green
Within my memory, or if consumed,
'Twould seem with burnings quenchless,—it is well.
It is a penance that my heart can prize.
And but reminds me that as they late went
Thro' fire and flood of passion—that wild sea
Of crystal glory melting into flames
Which make the sea to be no more, but one
New world of righteousness—so may we from
World-strife to love's repristinated light
Pass thro' like elements to happier fields.

—But come, we must not venture to the night.
The air grows chill: to me there seems a weight
Which easing burdens from the heart lifts not.
My prayer be tapers to illumine thy cell,
As thine do me attend—I go within.—
May rest be thine! Farewell.—Soon rest to me.

1901

THE EMERSON CENTENARY

Lines written May 25th, 1903

A hundred years the age thy spirit attains:
Thy still advancing eye, and we salute thee!
The times of thy bequest can find no stains
On thy Fame-written scroll. Their eyes were
 blind,
Ears deaf, once living; nor could hate pollute thee

With unbelieving rust. Thy sceptered steel,
So quick of edge, cutting was ever kind;
And what thy wisdom knew, late-learning hearts
 now feel.

A FAMILY CHRISTMAS

"Ho! what shall Santa bring?" Let's see.
My mama says she thinks that he
Should bring to her
An opera dress of *peau de soie*,
A new style sealskin coat, and gee!—
A set of fur.

Said papa, "Sister, what for you?"
And she said, "I make my *début*
Next month, you know;
And all my gowns must then be new,
So these I'd like, some jewels, too,
From Santa's dough."

And, well for me,—I want a set
Of circus actors, thirty *net*,—
I know they're high;
A fine Scotch collie for a pet,
A real live biplane, and you bet,
Here's where I'll fly.

Then papa looked up rather sad,
And said, "Well, Christmas is for dad
A pious curse;
The thing has somehow got in bad:
I'll have, what I have always had,—
An empty purse!"

THE CANDY TOOTH

My papa says, "My gracious! but
That boy has got a candy tooth!"
And grandpa says, "Each one that's cut
Gets sweeter." Grandma says, "Forsooth!"

Then mama asked, "What can we do?"
And Jack he fired out, like a bullet,
"It must be pulled!" Said grandpa, "Pooh,
Just hear him crow! Is that a pullet?"

Said grandma, "Were they false like mine,
'Twould cure him; but his second set
May help." Said papa, "Ten to nine,
They're sweeter!" And I said, "You bet!"

Then sister brought a string. I guess
I jumped like cracklings in her skillet.
"Have *you* a cure?" asked papa. "Yes;
I think the best one is to fill it!"

1912

SONG-SPARROW

The song-sparrow sings his young to their birth,
Then loses his carol in mouths he must feed,
And winging swift provident flights on the earth,
 Approving love's worth,
A busied life, fruitless of song, does he lead.

Is it worry of wings,
Is it sadness of tongue;
Is it planting his song in the throats of his young,
 That he saddens, nor sings?
1899

SPEAKING OF THE BLUES

The sky is blue,
And the sea is blue,
And blue thy beauteous eye;
But the sky's soft blue,
And the deep sea's blue,
When the light is mild and the winds are still,
Cannot, howe'er they may try,
Match the sweet serene and the mystic thrill,
The enchanting power o'er a man's weak will,
Of thy hope-lit, love-deep eye.
1899

A BEGONIA BLOSSOM

*A child having called the ear-like petals of the
Begonia Rubra "the ears."*

Child of the innocent light
That glimmers from thrones of the Kingdom,
Bearing sweet mysteries down from the height,
Till visitant spirits on wing come
Their realms to impart:—
Earth's other best symbol of light and of power let
Speak to you in the begonia's red floweret,
For it listens to you with the heart.
1901

LES DIVORCONS

"True, for the hardness of your hearts," said He,
"Moses did give you to divorce the wife;

And yet the Primal Will was never so:
For it was said, 'Ye are one flesh.' Ye see
My law then is, Make not two deaths of life."

"True, hard—so hard no old love charms—
e'en so;

Yet soft, my Lord, when Cupid bends the bow!"
1908

NOW WOULDN'T IT?

If near his neighbor's billy goat,
A man should bow
To pluck a posy for his coat,
Just thinking how
His sweetheart would like beauty lend—
A double bliss:
The goat would quickly put an end
To him and his.

1908

AFTER-DINNER IMPROMPTU

To speak at a banquet when brains are befuddled,
To doubt of your subject, and know it is muddled;
To feel that while brief you are longer by half
Than is relished by those who may give you a laugh,
Is torment enough. But, oh! greater disaster
It is to be missed by the genial toastmaster.

1915

A SOUL'S RETREAT

And ah, what days love blossomed here!

My life grew as the spring;
A promise of the rainbow's birth
Was circled in this ring,

Which brightened in its fuller orb,
And freshened as the day,
While smiles of many a May-time sun
Still called the clouds away.

Then fell, alas, the winter's rage
As from the sky's deep blue!
The gray sad season of distress
Bore down with love untrue.

And now a frost makes drear the world,
Its blueness steels the cheek;
Awearied with the city streets,
Ah, whither roam? I seek

A quiet woodland, once my home,
With song and peaceful rest,—
Before to him I thought to yield
To plant with thorns my breast,—

Where I may miss the cruel winds
Beneath—how chaste the snow!
—What else? *O Tamar, whither can*
*I cause my shame to go? **

1902

* II Sam. 13, 13.

THE MAGAZINE

Let the Arab be thanked for the Magazine!
A word of his Arabic fathers the cult
Of the classic crew who with catapult
Hurl out over city and croft a rain
The like of which ne'er the East had seen
From Baba's tongue or Plato's brain.

As a fire from heaven, not quite divine!
Tho' here and there is a Sodom doomed,
And out of its death is an Abram groomed
To plead with God as the people's friend.
And once in an age may the Muse combine
With the critic crew a boon to send.

French deed with the Arab's word conspired
To give to the thing new meaning. Lo,
The wit at last of a Renaudot
Provides a store for stories—a mart
Of history, fiction, or verse, attired
In all the grace of a Daudet's art.

But the modern world is of commerce primed,
And wit draws wine from that cellarage;
And the Magazine must the spigot gauge
By the guzzler's taste. True art were sloth,
And what is best to the pocket is timed:—
For great is the relish for Spartan broth!

1910

HEROISM

The mariner with the snarling seas,
The admiral of the fretful foam,
Who gives no heed to enharboring lees,
But craves a prayer of who fears at home,
And plows straight on thro' the dateless deeps,—
Where wraith by path of each soul that sleeps
'Neath surge warns, "Care, lest thou hither
turn,"—
Is hero of daring, as a world may learn.

The soldier of frenzied battle-array,
The captain of the foeman's field,
Who parries e'en Fate's stern yea and nay,
Who grapples with Death and will not yield
To him one guess of a shuddering fear,
But says him, "Nay, and our peace is near
That bathes thy brow with a living gleam,"—
Is hero of glory and history's theme.

The statesman whose grasp is of heart to see,
Reformer and friend of the gnarled mass;
Whose lips the festival-summers to be
Proclaim; who lets the hissings pass
Of ganza-men whose cry is, "The moon
Our summit is"; who late and soon
Unto fainting Truth lets his red blood,—
Is hero of virtue to men and God.

The poet whose field of delight is soul,
Prophet of faith to a world's gloomed heart;
Whose Hampden-will can pay no toll
To overlords of the golden mart;
But to his lute's each string and fret
Leads on his age to an Olivet,
Whence after the spirit we learn of Christ,—
Is hero of the light's evangelist.

The mother with brow thorn-crowned with care,
Priestess and precept in holier shrine
Than angels guard, since she with prayer
Both flesh and spirit may serve to refine;
She that with love draws flame from the clod,
She that is love as the mother of God;
With spending and forming a love in him,—
Is hero's heroine till the last stars dim.

1908

TO MADELINE

What but thine can be the splendor
That in lily's wave is seen?
Or of windflower graced on slender
Stem, acclaiming thee as queen?—
O wan flowers, well may ye lend her
Wealth ye from the sunlight glean.

Theirs the raiment, not the thrilling
Vital fury thou thy dress
Giv'st—yet breath of passion chilling
With soul's touch of winsomeness:
Thine the subtle charm makes willing
Flesh should soul for aye possess.

Yea, and thine the rarer glory
Witching colors give the gem.
Ruby, opal's blue, the frory
Diamond, sapphire,—some seek them!
They thy jewels, I love's story
Treasure for hope's diadem.

Why? For thine is most that dearer
Worth that sweetens in thy heart;
Mystery all, yet telling clearer
Me, than all things else impart,—
Maiden Madeline, O how nearer
Life is than the toys of art!

1908

AN EPITHALAMIUM

A modest eye, a manly brow,
Of maid, of youth, are virtue's seal:
He from the schools or from the plow,
She rose or lily, are—ideal.

He bears the grace of worth, and is
The earnest of our manhood's goal;
The buffs of fortune are to his
Attack, a play to strengthen soul.

She with the worth of grace is rich,
Her dowry brings for his release;
Attained, atoned, attuned, they pitch
The lives they live, or give, to peace.

1909

NON OBSTANTE

If, in your life, I came so late,
It was not I that willed, but Fate;
If from your life I go, not I
But Fate will choose. And if I die,
And Love bear theft at either end,
Not Fate can make me less thy friend.

1910

GOOD NIGHT!

Go, gentle one, in duty sleep,
Go, lovely one, for beauty sleep;
Thy heart knows why I should delight
To stay thee here the long good night.
But heart and mind agree to spare
What on the morrow they may share.
The day is done, O joyous day!
The day is done, let it away.
The night enfolds the wearied earth;
It brings thee sleep, and brought us mirth.
And life is strange—to give its best
To those who leave and take its rest!
Let fairies come from realms of myth
And in thy slumbers thee be with.
Thy dreams be true, if they be fair:
If not, vanish in the air.
Whate'er they be, thy day was wise
And in thy bosom softly lies,
To whisper how tomorrow's rose
Or thorn is in tonight's repose.
Then, dear, good night! the day is done:
Our love has light from sun to sun.

1912

DIXIE NATIONAL

Let the anthem rise of a mighty nation,
God said, "Cease from tribulation,
Look away, look away, for I have chosen Dixie."
In Dixie land He gave us dwelling,
He shall hear our anthem swelling,
"Look away, look away, to Him be praise in Dixie."

Then we'll sing again of Dixie,
Hooray, hooray,
In Dixie land, if Truth command,
We'll live or die for Dixie.
Away, away,
All evil days from Dixie!
For aye, for aye
We'll sing in praise of Dixie.

From the Merry Dancers' northern glory,
South, to the Cross of sacred story,
Look away, look away, our land is one in Dixie.
From the east whence came our day's adorning,
West, away to the Judgment morning,
Look away, look away, our land is one in Dixie.

And should Uncle Sam, who minds square dealing,
Expand his waist to match his feeling,
Look away, look away, the wide world would be
Dixie.

But he, content with our resources,
Holds the stars within their courses,
Look away, look away, while we have peace in
Dixie.

And in Dixie land, be it east or west, sir,
North or south, why, each is best, sir,
Look away, look away, for each to us is Dixie.
While Liberty reigns here, should vampires
Rise, they'll meet with Freedom's campfires,
Look away, look away, no wrong shall dwell in
Dixie.

1909

THREE WISE MEN

Rode three wise men, and three abreast,
Across the world from east to west.
They searched thro' city, field, and town,
But could not find where Love looked down.

For one of these, a scientist,
Found not in nature nature's Christ;
He said with grief, but not with awe,
"'Tis cruel—'red in tooth and claw.'"

And one, tho' called philosopher,
Read human nature, and in her
He saw an incense from the clod,
But not the fire that spake of God.

The least, a theologian, took
The others' help, and then the Book;
But all he gained, or there could read,
Left him a bare and breathless creed.

And why should three, and three so wise,
Have wisdom's wit and not her eyes?
And how could three, who sought so far,
Not find great midnight's flaming Star?

THE HUMOR OF THE BIBLE

Who does not enjoy his fun?
Point him out and I am done
With such creature, less than man,
For whom laughter was the plan.
All that helps to brighten earth
Is a warrant for true mirth.
He has cursed the Master's work
Who stabs laughter with the dirk
Of complaining. And some praise
Gets to God, thro' all the days,
From the man who, if not holy,
Yet the imp of melancholy
Will admit not. All his evils
Are not worse than those blue devils
Some called pious pay respect to,
But which saints would quite object to.
He that would his laughter choke
Makes himself into a joke:
His Lear-tragedy of folly
Drives the fool to be more jolly.
Love, religion, business, life,—
Each with care, and each with strife,—
Each *sans* humor is disaster;
Each with fun will fatten faster.

Take your Bible—tho' so solemn,
It has fun in many a column.

Who can read of Jonah—fickle
Prophet,—and not have a tickle?
Or read Grandpa Isaac's wooing,
And not laugh at what was doing?
Or that Irish bull of Jacob's,
That gave Laban's love such shake-ups?
Samson's riddle—what more funny
Than his famous jest on honey?
How the welkin must have rung
When they tasted—and were stung!
Or his jackals, made to run
Tails ablaze, to vex the Hun;
Or their shame to die, alas,
On the jawbone of an ass!
How Delilah he deluded;
How his captors he eluded,
Till their shame found out the giver
In his fair Philistine heifer.
What turn the wit of Leah takes
When Rachel sees her son's mandrakes!
What vengeful wit cost Hamor all
When Jacob's sons "dugged down a wall."
Staid old Paul was once outré
In his humor—so blasé
Was the cult of circumcision,
He was forced to such derision.
Read Galatians—but to seek
For the by-play, read the Greek.
Stern Elijah's wit was rare
When Baal failed to answer prayer.
Much he mocked their sleeping god,
With jibes the prophets much he prod,

Till Jezebel, when they were slain,
Lent thunder to Elijah's rain.
Read Isaiah's skit on idols.
How the godly must with bridles
To their laughter first have heard it,
And to comic page referred it.
David, with Goliath, poking
Fun, and throwing stones, was joking
In a way that made fun-rations
For a while among the nations.
God to some is clothed in wrath;
But Scripture saith, "He shall laugh
That sitteth in the heavens." Haman,
Out of Esther, gives an *Amen*.
John, the son of Zebedee,—
Not much fun in him to see;
Yet Christ named him Son of Thunder,
Just to show what still lay under
Solemn mien and word so solemn
Pathos breaks in every column.
Once we read that Jesus wept:
Did He laugh? Could He have kept
Three whole years with Peter, John,
Thomas, Judas,—and have gone
With the Pharisees and Scribes,
And have found no place for jibes?
Yea, he wept—and how compelling!
But His laughers need no telling.
Even near Gethsemane
Peter's "I will die with Thee"
Brought a smile that hid the tragic
That was soon seen in the magic

Of the cock-crow.—If you take
His example, who so spake
None with Him might be compared,
You will find how humor shared
In what made the Perfect One
Fully perfect.

“God loves fun,”
Said a child once, “for if not,
Why the monkey?” ’Twere a blot
In creation’s reign of law,
If to laugh were made a flaw.
All that’s good has laughter in;
There’s some fun, too, in our sin;
And a madhouse has its ration
Of recurrent cachinnation.
Earth holds mirth and melody,
Heaven its joy in full degree:
He that cares to live without,
Man and God shall count him out.
Come, and read the epitaph
Of the man who would not laugh:
*“Since on earth he knew not how,
He is where he cannot now!”*

1918

IT WAS SAID IN TARSHISH

Once there was a Jew called Jonah.
God who made the abiyonah *
Put in him some of its capers
Till he would not serve the papers

Nineveh was needing. Seaweed
Then God fed him till he, squeezegeed,
Was well dried of caperberry,
And came forth a missionary.

Then he went and preached repentance,
Put a sermon in a sentence.
Woke the town with lightning flashes,
Till they quit their fun for ashes.

Then what happened, pray, to Jonah?
Must have eaten abiyonah,
Ate it too till he was bilious,
For he ended up rebellious.

1912

* Caperberry, Eccl. 12, 5.

GETTING AT THE ROOT OF THE
MATTER

Jack-in-the-pulpit, whose preaching enthralled,
Received on blue Monday a committee, who called
To see if their flowery chaplain, *sans* frock,
Would not get out one week and visit his flock.

They stated their case. Said Jack, "Brethren, I
know

My preaching has ginger—far more than your
dough

Has paid for,—besides, 'tis a difficult field,
And unless I keep at it, the trouble's not healed."

They argued till Jack gave them many a rap,
Till they threatened to visit the fair Bishop's Cap.
Jack said, "You may oust me, if ousting will suit,
But not till you've tasted my memory-root!"

They tried it—they tasted. And, "Say, Jack, your
spiel

Preached orthodox hell, but—your sample is real!"
"Don't like it?—then drop it!" They quit their
attack.

"True, a crackajack preacher can't of all trades be
Jack."

Well, the upshot was this: they voted that one
Could not do all that their parish wished done;
So they got them a sweet Lady's-Slipper to be
Their visiting deaconess—so gentle is she!

1910

A PREACHER'S RESPONSE TO HIS
WELCOME

I have come to be with you, a friend among friends,
In the honor that serves, in the fullness that spends;
In the strength that in weariness finds a true rest;
With the best of intentions to give you my best;
Not here as if speech, as if learning, sufficed,
But here to grow large in the greatness of Christ.

I have come as one called, one chosen, ordained;
Well knowing 'tis nothing, if here not sustained
By a touch of His presence whose ministry gives
To mine, or to any, a virtue which lives;
And hoping to bring but the best of the past,
With a wisdom that firm by the Spirit holds fast.

I have come as a shepherd, in pastoral care
To lead you, to feed you, where still waters are;
To search for the lost or the wandering, seek
To comfort the sick and to strengthen the weak;
To guide with the crook, or the staff, or the rod,
But more by the vision, unfolded, of God.

I have come as one wishing to be, as one can,
A man among men, and a true gentleman;
A citizen, brave with a vision that's clear;
A leader, but led by a prayer or a tear;
A man who lives cleanly, speaks fairly, is true,—
As good as I think may be borne with by you!

1915

"REVERSE THE MESSAGE"

"God give to me the best," we pray,
Too weak in faith to meet the test
Of braver souls who rather say,
"I gladly give to God my best."

"Show me Thy will, and I will see
If I may do Thy will." But no;
'Tis ours to say, "Thy will to me
Is first, whate'er Thy will may show."

"But show me where or when to serve,
Ere I shall choose." He does not call.
'Tis ours to say, "I shall not swerve
For time or place: for Thou art all."

Whatever—Lord, Thy will is best;
Wherever—Thou art also there;
Whenever—'tis at Thy behest:
I gladly leave all to Thy care."

1915

JUDGMENT

Some day this earth shall cry aloud
And say, "Alas, within its shroud
Is every gain that time hath lent
To those who were on pleasure bent!"

That day the best of earth will cry
And say, "Rejoice! for He is nigh
Who turns to jewels every tear,
To hope's fruition every fear."

What day of testing that will be!
What separation each shall see
Of every ill from every good,
Who spurn from those who love the Blood!

This day unto that day is kin,
For judgment keeps in every sin;
And they whose pride is in its blot
Have shame of hell and know it not.

1915

“HAVING THIS SEAL”

Saint or sinner? With some the answer
Is clearly found in the mark of the man, sir;
But some so walk that, as man to brother,
We may not tell the one from the other.

Sinners who walk on the earth so saintly,
And saints who pursue their course so faintly,
Are each for the other so oft mistaken
’Tis little surprise if our faith be shaken.

But saints who get by with some mischief hidden,
And sinners who enter the feast unbidden,
Alike shall find, tho’ we may have mixed them,
That the gulf uncrossed lies not betwixt them.
1916

THE MISER'S PRAYER

Our Father—God of mine and me,
Who art in heaven—mine the earth,
Thy name—costs nothing, as I see,
Be hallowed—well, 'tis little worth.

Thy kingdom come—not by my gold,
For that I need to spend on self;
Thy will be done—but left untold,
If I must publish with my pelf.

On earth—if it does not collide
With much that I myself must wish,
As now in heaven—(ill betide
Him who, the while I pray, cries "Pish!")

Give us this day our daily bread—
Give us, if plenty and to spare;
Give mine to me, 'twere better said,
And if too much, I some could share.

Forgive our debts—but I pay cash,
As we forgive—I close them out!
Our debtors—tut, some prayers are rash!
What can such nonsense be about?

And lead us—if there's danger nigh,
Not in temptation—we are weak;
But from all evil—when we cry,
Deliver us—'tis then we seek.

Love and Life

*For Thine the kingdom—make it go!
The power is Thine—we must admit;
And Thine the glory—be it so,
Now and for ever—think of it!*

1912

WORKINGMAN AND PROPHET

2 Kings, VI.

Now the workers went to the prophet's gate,
And said, "We dwell in a place too strait;
Come, let us go to the turbid stream,
And bring from the wood each man his beam,
And we will build, to our Father's eyes,
Such house as men of the vision prize."
Said the prophet, "Go." They said, "Thou too;
For labor is vain except faith renew
In the arm of man the dream of his soul,
And bring each plan to a wise control."
Then the prophet their wish well understood,
And together were they by the Jordan's flood.

Did ever a prophet with workingmen
Waste time or talent? It was not so then:
For work, the worker, and the prophet's word
Share alike in the profit, as saith the Lord.
That day gave witness, for it chanced that one,
His muscles bared to the beam and the sun,
Let slip the axe, and into the deep
It fell, and the workman was made to weep.
"Alas," he said, "'twas a borrowed tool,
And its owner will count me a careless fool!"
But Elisha said, "Point out the place."
And the poor man thought, "Can saving grace
Heal such a material loss!—How could
The iron swim up to meet the wood?"

But the workers left each man his beam,
And there they stood by the angry stream,
While the prophet provided himself a rod,
And afforded to them a token of God
As witness to power reposed in him
By their common Lord. "And the iron did swim."

There are some who doubt the simple facts,
Whose faith must await what had the axe.
But those to whom there is given the sight
Into what, unseen, has a limitless might,
Are not concerned with the vacant eyes
Of unbelief. For they see the prize
In the lesson taught, unknown to most,
That power is found where the power was lost;
That nothing is owned, but held in trust,
And each for his talent some answer must
Return to the Giver—not easily made
Except by the power of the prophet's aid.
And if wit be sharp as the tempered steel
It will aid us perhaps keenly to feel,
When we "fly off the handle" a worth is lost,
And we gain it again at Another's cost.
1919

“THE OTHER WISE MAN”

The fourth Wise Man—not as the three
Who knew their King of Glory born,
And brought rare gifts on that first morn
Of Christmas greeting, there to see
His first look on a world where we
Of Grace Divine by sin were shorn,—

Arrived too late to see the Man
Who from that Christmas Child had come
To martyrdom, supplied by Rome
To what in Herod's will began.
For, strange to speak, this Artaban
Had made the wayside path his home.

The Median in his vision saw
The Star that out of Jacob shone;
The Scepter that should now atone
For sin that broke the graven Law,
And filched from Mount that solemn awe
That should have made them His alone.

His brethren in the wisdom lore
He equaled; and he shared with them
A love that counted every gem
A tribute. Yet for evermore
Balthazar, Caspar, Melchior
Are named with Him of Bethlehem.

They share with that Angelic Choir
That to the lowly shepherds sang,

The while thro' heaven's arches rang
The shepherds' praises. These inspire
The ages with prophetic fire,
And will, while Law on Love shall hang.

The Temple of the Seven Spheres
Its fame forgot, while Babylon
Saw three who said, "We will pass on
To know the Promise now that nears
Fulfilment." And their only fears
Were why Ecbatana kept one

Who should have made his promise true
Here in Borsippa. But to men
He thought his duty first, and then
To God,—a fancy only new
When first the Tempter held the view,
Which often shall be held again.

He too "was busy here and there,"
And came to Babylon too late;
And when he came, found by the gate
A helpless Jew, to whom his care
Was precious. And with fainting prayer,
He stayed to watch him and to wait.

To him such deed of love was first.
A duty called, and he had tossed
A treasure, and would bear the cost;
Content to know that he had nursed
One of His brethren, not the worst,—
Tho' some reward of faith be lost.

The duty done, he went his way,
Detained for camels and for food;
And for such necessary good
A sapphire sold,—quite loath to stay
A needless moment. Yet each day
Some urgent need before him stood.

The Star he followed till its wane,
And then without its guidance went
To Bethlehem, where now was spent
The Glory, while by Herod's reign
The people mourned. But he would fain
Relieve the woe that Herod lent.

The voice in Ramah now he heard,
Refusing to be comforted.
While here he toiled among the dead,
His heart to pity often stirred,
One child he saved by one false word,
His ruby easing hearts that bled.

To Egypt then he took the road.
There none to worship could he find;
Yet, not to duty being blind,
A help on many he bestowed.
He felt it was but what he owed,
And found his task in being kind.

Then to Jerusalem he came,
To where the Galilean taught.
But tho' he Him so long had sought
And found on every lip His Name—

To curse or else to voice His fame,—
Yet still his time with toil was fraught

Till doing good he missed the best.
He kept indeed a Parthian maid
From shame. For this he gladly paid
Price of his pearl. It was the test:
He met it, as he met the rest,
And all upon his altar laid.

Years fled; he followed on the Light,—
Yet never came to where He walked
With men more wise, to whom He talked
Of duty that denied no right,
If only that within His sight
His will is not by self-will mocked.

“The poor are always with you.” “Yea,
And therefore why a needless waste?”
So Judas reasoned, quick to taste
A gall in what his Lord might say.
Yet Mary chose the better way,
As Love with Faith her Saviour faced.

“The first and great commandment,” see,
Is not to find Him thro’ good deeds,
But thro’ Him find the greater needs.
Not Wise Man, as the other three,
But Otherwise, he proves to be,
And points a moral for who reads.

TROPHIMUS

Saintly Trophimus, beloved of Paul,
Was a man who gave for the Gospel all
A lover of God and of goodly men
May give in the service of Christ. And then,
With Paul at Miletus, a sickness fell
On him who had wrought in the work so well,
And he tarried behind, the Apostle says,
And we can but think on the Master's ways.

Was the sickness "an error of mortal mind"?
Was it plainly a proof that the saint had sinned?
Was there a lack in his faith in prayer?
Could Paul do none of his healing there?
Or was the "light affliction" a way
To the "greater glory" of an after day?
'Twere easy to fashion one's faith about:
But His ways are still past finding out.

1919

THE PROPHET'S PARABLE

One little ewe lamb was a poor man's all,
For which he had given his heart outright;
She fed from his cup, she came at his call,
She cozily lay near his heart by night.
He only was happy when in her sight;
With him and his children she lived at play,
And care she had artfully wiled away.

But one who was rich, in his flocks and herds,
Had an ample joy in his wealth alone;
To his feast was brought of their flesh and curds,
For sin would the priest with their blood atone.
And so was his fame thro' the kingdom known,
Until, in his pride, they had fancied him
All guarded and groomed by the cherubim.

To his gate a traveler came, to see
The splendor of which men proudly spake.
The host gave welcome, and straightway he
Ordered a feast, and he sent to take
The poor man's lamb—of his all to make
To himself a pleasure for one brief hour,
Forgetting his flocks, and abusing his power.

His hurt unknowing, the poor man stood
In peril of life, at the cutting edge
Of battle, in which for the king his blood,—
With never the need,—was a sacred pledge.

His honor he kept, tho' his lord might hedge
A want of honor with mitre and crown,
And cover the sin in a dread renown.

But ever the wit and the sin of man
Have answer to make to the Seeing Eye;
And along with the deed the debt began
Which drew from a grave and a throne a cry,
While life was condemned fourfold to die.
So, veiled by the prophet, the king his doom
Calmly announced in his judgment room.

Then prophet to king, with the two-edged sword
O' the Spirit, revealed that the battle-line
Lay upon his heart. And saith the Lord,
"No sin so subtle and serpentine
But will in its coils thy life entwine!
Stand up, O David! The poor man's ewe
Was Uriah's own—and the debt is due."
1919

THE LIFE OF VERSE IS LIFE

A poem is not as a pearl,
To look upon and prize,
And say, "Thy face, O jeweled girl,
Mocks fleshly destinies:
For, maugre what time or chance may be,
Intrinsic thy worth shall be to me."

Verse may be quite as precious, yea,
And to some few more sweet;
And rarely one will wisely say
The thing the wise repeat,
With feeling that none but the poet told,
With phrasing of pearl, its setting gold.

Yet I have known of other verse
Some minor poet spake,
That some called weak and others worse,
That more my heart can take
Than faultlessly groomed and polished turns,
Where a fancy flits, but no passion burns.

When I my treasures gather then,
Store for a cultured mind,
I'll go where Life with lute hath been:—
Recalling, of lesser kind,
That many be rare, and many as true,
But none taketh me as "Little Boy Blue."

So I shall know of poets gone,
And such as with us stay,
'Tis not the name men reckon on,
Nor what their bards may say:—
Nay, not alone what their verse affords,
But what my life may yield to their words.

1910

INEQUALITIES

How many there be, all sad and wan,
Who dwell in the shades where spectres keep;
Who longed for the light, forever gone,
And being denied, have hastened on
To a troubled sleep.

How glad their coming!—with what delight
They took their place in the Ship of Life;
And thro' the waves, and under the night,
Came to their glimpse of the harbor light,
And a city of strife.

But one warm heart was mother to them,
And out of an anguish brought to birth;
And with fancy fashioned a diadem,
To which her tears gave many a gem
Of a rarest worth.

And to them a father was come, to wave
A welcome across the unknown sea;
He gave of strength, and a prayer he gave
That the gates of dawn, and not the grave,
Might their portion be.

They had comrades here who had sailed before,
Who were brothers to them in the Primal Past;
Who then knew naught of the *less or more*
Of time, till an opalescent door
Swung wide at last.

But here caprice, or immutable law,
Sundered as if to a separate star;
For the one but spake, and we stood in awe;
The other, unheard, oft wept and saw
The glory afar.

Was the secret there, in the Palace Blue,
Or ever they stood by the shimmering quays
Of dawn, and wondered if half were true
They fancied of life?—'Tis not, sir, you,
Nor any, that sees.

Or was there a cause that met them here,
And bade them abide their shift of Fate;
That made them to stand far off in fear,
Or tantalized by a bringing near
To the Festal Gate?

No matter! For surely the feast was known
To witness that something was out of joint;
When one breast beamed with pearls that shone,
And his mate must sit, with a heart of stone,
To his broth and point.

There are who think that the cause, indeed,
Is the First and Ultimate Cause of all;
Who hold as part of a querulous creed,
'Tis ours to fail—and His to bleed,
To amend the fall.

At the least we fail, and the devil's grip
Holds firm, whatever the creed we hold;
For if fast or slow, the step will slip,
And fact of the doing belie the lip,
As ever of old.

Oh, the width that spans the good from best
Is little indeed,—but who can tell
How far the one outruns the rest
In final reward, the ultimate test
Of heaven or hell?

Yet knowing it all, we bring them in—
As in fancy's field we sow the seed,—
And by garners of hope or tares of sin
The harvest declares what each may win,
By a lot decreed.

There, see, a poet lilts on in verse:
The Muse attends, and the marts await.
His brother, with voice but little worse,
Begins in hope, to end in a curse
On his evil fate.

Children of fancy, or flesh and blood,
Alike share they in no equal race;
For the poet may rime his runes by rood,
And our flesh bring forth, but to each will God
Appoint the place.

1919

SONGS—FROM "SIR HARRY VANE"

I

To the brow of a hill,
By ancient Nazareth,
Where the winds to the crags shrilled forth a wail
To pierce man's heart,
Came a throng with rage as the swelling flood,
In wrath which ill will could alone impart,
(As their temples in darkness stood),
To cast, with a cry of *You lose* and *You fail*,
The Man of Nazareth
From the brow of the hill.

II

The greensward drank the robin's song,
And found it dew and sunshine to it;
And they that listened found ere long
With life his music could endue it:
For mignonettes and clover-blooms
Breathed victory soon o'er winter tombs.

1901

L'ENVOI
TO "SIR HARRY VANE"

I

Soul of the Prophet, Thou
 (Child of the manger)
Knowest our longings, how
 Straitened with danger.

Rest to the wind mocker
 Hopes that we cherish!
Carest not, Wave-walker
 Thou, that we perish?

Zeal in thy people tires,
 Troublers annoy them:—
Dare we call heaven's fires
 Down, to destroy them?

II

Little we know of Thy
 Manner of spirit!
Angrily oft we try
 Peace to inherit.

Thy lips knew love's worth—
Sheep before shearers:
Silence that made the earth
Speakers or hearers.

Harsh was yon citied hill,
Crimsoned with sorrow,—
Cross that few pitied, till
Look! rose the morrow,

Bringing love's triumph, where
Wrath did for ruth rend
Veil, that the temple's prayer
Forth might His truth send.

1904

SONGS—FROM "HALDIMAND"

I

Give a rouse, ye English men!
Rebels one, and patriots ten,
Tells, their issue is defeat,
Trumpets, victory is sweet,—
Give a rouse, ye English men,
Give a rouse!

Give a rouse, ye English men!
Patriots one and rebels ten
Were as easy to put down
As red-coat a dirty town,—
Give a rouse, ye English men,
Give a rouse!

II

Dan Cupid is a little Dan,
Slim bow and slender arrow;
But when he draws for maid or man,
Escape is none or narrow:
And who is he that quiet can
The fears he will upharrow?

1909

SONG—FROM "HALDIMAND"

Nothing is beneath the sun
That doth not its journey run,
Tremblingly or passing brave
Touch the chill lips of the grave:
 Strew me rose or spray me holly,
 I have done with melancholy.

All that lives within the light
Of the stars, must take the night
For a shroud, and here beneath
Joy and tears lie still in death:
 Strew me rose or spray me holly,
 Thine not mine is melancholy.

All thy gold is tinsel'd earth,
Dust shall gain thy beauty's birth,
Ashes are the mirths of men,
Hope—a chance to grieve again:
 Strew me rose or spray me holly,
 Life not death is melancholy.

1907

SONG

He that loves me for my gold
Knows not my philanthropy:
With such love the world is cold,
By a true love must be free.
He that spends but of his purse
Hoards a love to spend a curse.

1910

CHRISTMAS CHEER

The merry merry Christmas can come but once a
year,
But every day, and all the way, the loving Christ
is here;
The gifts we give, tho' dear today, both rich and
poor shall find
Are of the day, and for the day, and soon are
out of mind.
But He that gave the Perfect Gift still gives to
you and me:
His gift is love that gives to life love's immor-
tality.

1911

IMMORTELLES

To H. I. M.

Vattene in pace, alma beata e bella.

"Helen's lips are drifting dust";*
She has immortality.
Robed in art or crowned in verse
Is earth's one vitality.
Weep the fragile vase who must:
Brief the rose-bud? Much were worse.

Do the snowdrops drooping die?—
One may sweeten half the spring.
Breath of sweetness thro' the years
May the tulips blow, I sing.
Weep the groundflame's ashes?—Why?
Autumn is the test for tears.

Two hearts held what Attic song
Brought of beauty, lent of love,
And a glory gone from Greece.
Two hearts felt what most would move
Sage or poet joust with Wrong,—
And they answer, Go in peace.

1908

* Frederic Lawrence Knowles.

TRUE AMARANTH

In Memoriam, H. G. M.

His was so little of what we call life,—
Just a breath from the primal dew,
Just a smile from the other while
Of soul that awaits us there, if true,—
That strange, in a world where gray ills are rife,
He should both joy and grief beguile.

Yet if so brief, O rare was the love,
Sweet and full, that his day contained!
How with a touch he gave so much
To what thro' loss our lives have gained!
For so is the bounty of treasures above,—
Our lives go softer for that touch.

1910

WHERE A BETTER CHRISTMAS KEEPS

The Christmastide returns with cheer,
The winter skies again rejoice;
With angel carolings appear
The sweetest echoes earth can hear,—
The laughters of a baby's voice.

Yet with such joys around, there comes
To me and mine a dissonance;
It keenly seems a sorrow thrums
A lute that time in measure numbs,
And wakes the bitter strain of chance.

For Oh, how strange! one Christmastide
Ago, and he, our boy, was here;
His baby joy our joys supplied,—
And yet four days from then he died,
And left to us a joyless year.

Today, please God, around that throne
Where Christmas keeps, to lend earth joy,
The Christmas Child will greet His own,
And, with His presents made, make known
A year's tear-treasures to our boy.

1910

TO WHAT PURPOSE?

A wind today on leaf, in bough, is sighing,—
Grief that when Lear's
Thin, sorrow-ripened locks in storm went flying,
Was old and dried of tears.

For so a strife there is thro' peace that wavers,
Shade on the light;
A something good that always evil favors,
A scourging of the right.

For since the dawn when at the tree of learning
Hope's novice tried
To find a fuller life—the effort earning
The curse where strivings died,—

Have they of courage, thought, of will been paying
Their price of sin,
To gain the gates where keeper Truth is saying,
“Come thou, and enter in.”

And tho' we think to forfeit so by daring
Is somehow best;
Yet from the crowd learn how, by little caring,
The lowly seem the blest.

1910

AN EPITAPH

Come, snowdrops of winter and fall lightly here,
Ye sunbeams of summer, come, shine brightly here;
Ye bring to us slowly the now unknown year
When hearts that are lonely shall find their lone
cheer.

1910

A SUPPOSED *RESURGAM*

I

My dreams are dead:
The passioned glow
Of youth has fled,
And life is woe.
Its past, I know,
Is scattered dust;
And God, I trow,
Has quit its trust.

II

My path was chance,
And Fate has won;
I chose to dance
With Death—begun
Was then life's sun
To cool his fires;—
Where limbs but run,
The spirit tires.

III

To walk in shame,
Alas, deceived;
Of life's pure fame
I stand bereaved.

So virtue, grieved,
O'ercasts with gloom—
Sends unretrieved
To pass the tomb.

IV

Oh! He that first
Our spirits gave,
The soul hurt worst
Shall He yet save?
—A dawn shall lave
The brow of night;
This sod may wave
A lily's white.

1907

AN IN MEMORIAM

Ye who loved the silent dead,
Weep not that his task is done;
Fairer fields he now may tread,
Blest with all his life here won.

He would not that ye should weep,
While that he has greater joy:
Green his memory ye will keep
Who shall your lives best employ.

1904

JERUBBAAL

Judges VI, 31, 32

Alas! that oft in advocate one reads
The note of stern endeavor to defend
His God, thinking that he to Heaven can lend
Admired apology! Thus Baal pleads.
Man's labored argument—how little needs
Propulsive nature's Life! Him they commend
Who slip the bondage that may most offend—
Traditions' damps, or their bark-binding creeds.

He that with verse of subtlest music sought
To "justify the ways of God to men,"
Sees not the vapory gloom with morning keep.
His laureled *theme*, then living, is now naught
Save fossil form,—his *spirit* triumphs as when
Creative Soul brooded the formless deep.

1902

THE POETRY OF AUSTERITY

(*See Matthew Arnold's "Austerity of Poetry"*)

The Muse, with nymphs dancing, was once besought
Of poets. Homer blind, then saw: her dance
demure

Drew rhythmic strains. She Virgil's harp did lure
To loose its music from the strings. She taught
Passion to Dante. And she subtly wrought
Thro' Shakspeare's lyre the dreamy world's rapt
cure.

Young Milton prayed to that chaste spirit pure;
So Goethe, Shelley, Burns, and Keats. She caught

Apollo's two chief seers of later age.
But one, alas, said that to him the Muse
Was girt with sackcloth! Had she not bequeathed
To his austerity the wonted views?
Or silks or sackcloth veiled her limbs! His page
Poetry of sheer intellect, unbreathed.

1902

DE PROFUNDIS

Out of the multitudes when shall there rise
The one dear spirit of my anxious quest?
When, from the goodly company of "best"
The world speaks of, the one my soul shall prize
Her very own,—made mine by destinies
That formed a soul that only may be blest
Attuned to complete harmony? The test—
A lute-soul's chord but one voice glorifies.

Out of these deeps many are they have cried:
Some whose lone shadows have outkept the night,
Their tears uncrystal'd; some that wept, to be
So soon content with whom they had no pride
To choose. I seek—yet question which were
right—
One voice, or else "the rest is silence" to me.
1903

VERITAS

The temple doors shone moving on the night,
When startled, I uprisen smote the breast,
Rebuked for harboring a vague unrest
At altar's task; till Voice above the light,—
"Seek Beauty, Wisdom, Love. No priestly rite
Informs; my prophets pass; their quest
Is on the heels of darkness, till the blest
Far citadels of Truth await their sight."

What drew these on, let not my heart disdain
Its passion for. If custom's wilful mask
Disguise, it shall be torn; if shepherd's crook
Bind to the soil, not I that gentle swain;
If friends entreat, I clasp no hand; but ask
Humbly the way my soul's three prophets took.

1903

TO THE AMERICAN NEGRO

Ah, when shall this world's thirst for blood be done?
The heathen tribes letting red streams for mirth,
Liegeman and lord who coin its dripping worth
In cankering gold, the proudly passionate son
Of cavalier whose guarded fountains run
Riot in muddled lust, leaders whose dearth
Of sacrifice yet sluice scant veins in earth,—
Have wreaked confederate hate in thirst for one.

Theirs Saxon blue, and Afric's course thy veins:
A shade of tropic bares thee to the lash,—
The whip of thongs, else that of fiercer pains
Thro' social curse, that would thy spirit abash,
But cannot, since within His ark thy rod
Buds, Aaron-like,—“Let rebels fear,” saith God.
1904

TO W. A. Q.

When to the fancy of delighted minds
A youth presents—as feigning to nonplus—
A harp-shell, conch, or chambered nautilus,
And meets one swift on rapture borne, he finds
Imagination now that spirit binds
To worlds of phantasy. “On, Pegasus,
O’er dust or surge! I seem as Æschylus,
My steed’s hoofs now on waves and now on winds!”

If so thy keen delight in song may greet
With favor this, then may I dare essay
A sonnet postscript to my poetry;
Assured this shell cast from the tides will meet
With ear so sensitive to song, it may
Thro’ sonnet hear the full tones of the sea.

1905

UPON THE HEELS OF PRESENTMENT

(See "*Timon of Athens*")

" 'Upon the heels of my presentment, sir,'
The book is forth. Then with the painter's art,
That tutors nature; in the merchant's mart,
Where to the getting of gold how great the stir
It wakens, is the test; with jeweler,
Whose stone's rare form and water unclew the
heart,
It still must vie. Let first my risk impart
Lord Timon's will and Apemantus' slur."

Little he knows if then—his metaphor—
The white sail of his pearl of poet craft
Shall change to eagle wing, unwet of wave,
On trackless way that others dream of. Or
If cerements of that sea shall shroud his grave,—
As if the gods, not he, it were, best laughed.
1908

TWO READERS

On tides of thought, adrift with mind, and toss'd
By thrilling surges, one will risk to thrive;
Sea-weed he gathers, drinks cooling spray, the live
Storm bares to, dares (barque helmless, sea-
enmoss'd),
To go where most like derelicts accost.
He, thinking Chance his idle fault shall shrive,
In words, not faith, of Paul says, "Let her drive!"
And in much furies spent, is driven or lost.

And one is wiser, who—not crowding sail,
And skilled to reef his canvas for the breeze,
Lets Thought impawn wild Chance to ease his
way.
He, when the tides withdraw, and when winds fail,
When melt the lights that fleck the gloaming seas,
Minds more his chart of stars than dolphins'
play.

1909

RADICAL AND CONSERVATIVE

He taught a doctrine, loosely termed a creed,
That men thought radical. To them it was
A radical departure from old saws,
Cant phrases, unctious sentences, indeed.

He breathed a freer spirit, taught the need
Of a quick-minded answer to the laws
Of kindness, stronger in his tongue than jaws
Of death in some, to help the bruised reed.

Some few knew him the true conservative.
So high and just his values, few could tell
Of beauty, wisdom, love, or how to live
Them out as he. He poured not thro' a sieve
His stream of the water of life—not radical,
As Calvinist, to damn mute souls in hell.

1909

ECCLESIASTES

"Time and chance happeneth to all."

If Time and Chance be boon or bane to all,
And Time be brief as any fleeting thing,
And Chance be filled with weird imagining,
And both be passing now beyond recall:

There is with men, despite such heavy thrall,
A glory lighting gloom in burgeoning,
A profit scorning waste in triumphing,
A spirit brave to mock the specter's pall.

For Chance and Time are in the passing gone,
They die unsorrowed as their sorrows wane.
They, as their furrowing steel in flesh is seamed,

Are stolen away, and where Time's glimmer shone
Is risen morn; where Chance sent writhed pain
Is joy, that angel harps are silent deemed.

1910

THE SHORTENED HARVEST

*"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it
a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?"*
—I Corin. IX, 11.

If of the spirit we have sown to you
In that which made the desert as the rose,
Which wedded strength of life to such repose
As only keeps within the pure and true;
If schools we planted, freedom brought to view,
Reforms engendered; if we shared your woes
When most you wept, and counsel gave that
shows
In your rich gain of goods and goodness too:—

Shall then, (when we the givers give to youth
Our places at your wish, and have no gold
But golden sunsets, you who gathered wealth
Of carnal things forget to wed the truth
Of creature comforts to your servants' health,
Who reap a shortened harvest when they're
old?

1916

THE HALLOWED NIGHT

It is the night when in the faithful heart
Fond memories foregather of all souls;
When they once dear, counted among the dead,
Teach us how truly, when their spirits depart,
They leave with us a force that yet controls,—
A something that in loss has comforted,
The whisper of a name long hallowèd,—
So real, that in remembrance, tears will start.

What memories to me, O Spirit brave,
That mothered me in flesh! For in this night,
As it grew dawn, He clothed thee with delight,
Leaving to us thy dust, and to the grave.
But since He saith the dead in Him shall rise,
That from the grave we look for from the skies.
1918

THE PASSING OF YOUTH

Time doth with change this mortal life renew
To unrenewing age. The seasons pass,
And passing bring our frailties fast to view.
The hopes we held to stay the ebb, alas,
Avail not! for the flood of years confess
Man hasteth on to man's forgetfulness,
To learn at last why time the secret kept.
Who cares? For time his own consuming rust
In time consumes. Into a dreamless dust
Time may not bear one spirit that hath slept.
For after chance and change are done, I trust
To stand in years made perfect and unwept,
Where, from this frailty come, my eyes may prove
The mortal perfect of Immortal Love.

1919

UNTIMELY DEATH

Did ever death come fitly to relief
 Of those who were in ill mismating bound;
 Who kept a prison'd life, where round on round
Of eating care drew down a settled grief?
They did not dare to center a belief
 On angel by that door: right would impound
 Such thought, and honor rather bear the wound
Than let such wish of self-respect be thief.

But oh, how often death has cut the tie
 That held twin spirits to our earth's delight,
 Leaving one spirit broken! Into light
 The other going, felt it was to gloom:
One loath to live, the other loath to die,
 Since death or life to either alone were doom.

1919

CHRISTMAS AND WORLD WAR

Bright, over all the world,
The Star is yet gleaming,—
Halo, whose light impearled
Yet brightens while streaming.

Oh, never Christmas came
So full of the glory:—
Could all who bear the Name
But fathom the story!

Thrice Wonderful our Lord,
A Counsellor truly;
All-Mighty. Bears the word
No honor unduly.

Christ, whom eternity
Shall know as the Father;
Man, teaching man to see
Time's harvest to gather.

Yea, He is Prince of Peace:
What tho' there now thickens
War's din, from which release
The soul, praying, sickens.

Hell, loosing fiery bolts
Of hatred, discloses
Thrones driving hapless dolts
To death it imposes.

Near twenty centuries
Of Gospel proclaiming
Him whom the heathen see
The Christians defaming.

No, none can doubt the worth
Of message He gave us;
Some will of faith have dearth
The churches can save us.

Say not the churches fail,—
The failure is human.
Easy it were to rail,—
But show us the true man.

Creeds, thrones, and factions all
May perish tomorrow;
Love, law, and truth shall call
Above our spent sorrow.

They truly live and grow
Thro' every disaster:
Let ruin come—we know
They follow the faster.

What more has he that will
The church be upbraiding?
Night curtains both, we still
The Star have, unfading.

Who cares if kingdoms wane,
Or churches be sifted

Like Peter,—loss is gain,
If burdens be lifted.

Age after age returns,
And each one is evil:
Yet see, the bush that burns
Would teach us be civil.

No age but some will cry,
"The Promise—it fails you!"
We answer, "Time draws nigh
The Promise—what ails you?"

Soothsayer let him be,
'Tis only his dreaming;
None knoweth quite as he
How false is his seeming.

Love dares to bare the breast
To Doubt's every arrow;
Faith fails not—struggles best
Where footing is narrow.

Faith watches folly fail,—
Like Herod's wild slaughter;
Then hears a Voice cry, "Hail,
Thy King comes, O daughter!"

So, after Europe's blood
Is poured out, till kings too
Red hats wear,—till the good
That reason still clings to

Finds virtue unassailed,
And truth not diminished,
Sees justice has prevailed,
And says, "It is finished!"—

Then, hope we One shall stand
Above all that war lent,
Whose presence shall command
The Peace that the Star sent.

No, no millennium,—
That may be (He knoweth) ;
We, choosing, would say, Come!—
Yet pleased if He showeth

One faintest flush of fire
To brighten our gray dawn ;
One foregleam, lest we tire
When others have prayed on.

Yea, shall the Promise hold.
The old year is dying:—
New years and not the old
Must famish our sighing.

New years? Ah, Time can bring
Naught new but new sorrow ;
Save, only, it fetch the King
Of earth's rare tomorrow.

THE HARVEST OF THE YEARS

The light that slants from autumn suns,
While fruits and grain their fertile yield
Admit to harvest, slowly runs
To cheering hope that Europe's guns
Will reap no more their harvest field.

A second autumn crowns our good
Since they in hate and hurt are hurled
To be to fiery mouths the food,
Whose all but unavailing blood
Were price enough to buy a world.

What wrong so great has sown the earth
To heartache, unto distant years?
What sin, that God has brought to birth
The monster brood by whom a dearth
Of men shall make for women's tears?

Yet God is not in all their ways:
Not His the work that kings have wrought.
He stands afront these carnage-days
With outstretched hands, and pleading says,
"The blood of One had rather bought

Your freedom than the blood of these."
Some now are doubting of it all;
Some think the Keeper of the keys
Shall stand, one foot upon the seas,
And cry, and Babylon shall fall.

We know not,—only that the will
Of God no lot to men accords
To thwart His purpose, or to kill
The law of recompense that still
Shall justice do to under-lords.

But, ah! the suns that circle here
Seem veiled, as if all Europe's night
Had cooled their ardors,—or the sere
And soiled leaf of Time were near
To judgment: who can bear the light?

1915

THE *LUSITANIA*

“Stay thy proud waves!”

It could not be so once: the sea was His,
He made it; and to men, There go the ships,
In freedom of their trade for man.
Only the pirate dared their cargoes take,
Sparing both life and vessel. But, hear now,—
“Stay thy proud waves!”

“Stay thy proud waves!”

One narrow path the multitudinous seas
May offer now for what were mighty fleets;
Only if shamed with stripes they go!
Britannia rules no more; our ocean's gem
Is now undiadem'd: for hear who says,—
“Stay thy proud waves!”

“Stay thy proud waves!”

For tho' our brave are swallowed in their deeps,
Tho' that which gives a nation sovran right
Is by imperious will denied;
And tho' we thought to hear our Chieftain cry
A righteous wrath against it, this we hear,—
“Stay thy proud waves!”

“Stay thy proud waves!”

America, that when three million strong
Dared to defy the tyrant's tax on tea,
And proved insane a German king;

Now to silk hat can softly lift a hand,
"Too proud to fight!" And still we hear but this,—
"Stay thy proud waves!"

"Stay thy proud waves!"
Of old the stars were not too proud to fight
For Israel. The white-horsed Rider not,
Whose vesture dipped in blood, whose eyes
A flame, whose mouth a sword to voice His wrath
Upon presumptuous kings. But now, alas,—
"Stay thy proud waves!"

"Stay thy proud waves!"
To God we pray, the stars within our shield
Deny such pride, and that our only stripes
May be within our banners proud;
And trust He to His enemies shall say,
As when o'er Pharaoh's host His waters came,—
"Stay, *My* proud waves!"

1916

“LET US HAVE PEACE!”

“Let us have peace!” ’Twas Grant, the soldier,
spoke,

When after bitter war just victory

Had come. Long strife had given him to see
How sweet the event. Yet no such word awoke

Till Corinth, Vicksburg, Appomatox broke

The galling chains that in disloyalty

Had welded states, nor till a race was free
To find their peace without the cruel yoke.

“Peace without victory” was sought, and when

The world in welter and in writhing lay,

Where pitiless power and junker judgment set
A curse upon the forward hopes of men.

“Let us have peace!” Pray God, it come, and yet

Not till autocracy has had its day.

1916

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU

Arouse, O mighty nation of an hundred million
souls,
And stem the angry surge of war that now upon
thee rolls!
Too long the mailed fist has held the throat of
Liberty,
'Tis time at last when we may reach to hands across
the sea.

Some thought, forsooth, our hands were clasped too
tightly to our gold,
Some idly dreamt our flag was furled, its deeds of
glory told;
Some fondly hoped the hyphen-ties would break, to
leave a rent
Of civil war, to fuel that on which their plots
were bent.

The ties have vanished—in these fires we coalesce
to one,
With one resolve, to limit now their place within
the sun;
To give the Hohenzollern boast of “Gott mit uns”
that fell
From haughty lips, to find its place of infamy in
hell.

Yet not with malice, nor for gain, against whom
still as brothers

We regard, and shall regard,—we wish for them
as others

The glory of our cause that seeks on battlefields so
gory

Good will to men, a peace on earth, and in the
highest glory.

1917

NOT MEN, BUT A MENACE

The foe we face has German blood,
And German blood was ever brave;
And in our hearts 'tis understood
We seek not to destroy but save.
We chant no hymn of hate,—above
The strife we voice a hymn of love.

We fight as bravely and as well
As skill and duty may dispose;
And we shall mark the graves where fell
Two brothers who till then were foes:
If by advance or in retreat
Their deaths in valor shall compete.

Not men we fight, tho' men must die.
The things in men that mar and kill
Their better life, and cloud their sky
From light that streams in pure good will,—
'Tis this in them that we defy,
And why for them that we would die.

In them we see the mark of Cain,
That Abel's blood so foully let;
We could not love them if their gain
It were upon mankind to set
The monstrous measure of their thirst,
And leave the soul of them accursed.

Love and Life

There is no love but will chastise,
None if mere justice stand apart;
Oft bitter tears must purge the eyes,
And mortal pain improve the heart.
Never our love had less of dross
Than when we bravely faced the cross.

1917

BOCHE AND BOLSHEVIK

Boche and Bolshevik, alike in crimes,—
The two extremes of our disjointed times,—
Have each the age from an envenomed fang
Infected. One with that imperious will
To vaunt himself as superman, tho' rang
To heaven's gate his vow to rape and kill,
Writhes now himself to feel his poison pang.
The other, rising from th' ensanguined sea,
Sighting his throne upon its angriest wave,
Offers his dupes the vaunt of liberty,
And flotsam that his lust and passion crave,—
A viking code his heart's misanthropy.
Alike they hold the devil's law of might:
The devil take them—for God rules by right.

1918

EACH TO HIS HONOR

Millions went, and millions more
Waited for the tides of war
Just to lave their willing feet
In their flood, tho' home was sweet.

For the boys who went we keep
Golden honors. And we weep
For the lads to whom the chance
Came to wed the soil of France.

Such regret as lives at heart
For the ones who had no part
Is repaid by those who fought
With a skill that quickly brought

Victory that we had planned
To have part in. But the hand
That so nobly stayed the foe
Was upheld by ours, we know.

The enemy was multi-tongued,
Multi-handed, multi-lunged:
And they have their honors here
Who kept treason chained to fear.

1918

MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day!
The blue and gray
In thin, wan ranks fade fast away.
They think of these
Who overseas
In khaki clad brought this new day.

Once, foe to foe,
The fathers so
Purged out the dross from what is gold,
That now their sons
Might teach the Huns
To value what for naught they sold.

New victory
For all we see,
As proudly now the flag returns;
Red, white and blue
To me and you
Rekindle every hope that burns

In purest flame.
God grant the same
May for all time be our reward;
That Truth and Right
May give their light
To all who bravely stand on guard.

Today each grave
Their honor gave
To be our pledge for coming years,
Shall have perchance,
Here and in France,
The tribute of all thankful tears.

1918

THE DECLINE AND FALL

Out of the welter and ruin they wrought,
Out of the place in the sun they sought,
Out of the high regard they held
In a wide world's thought, by worth compelled;
Out of the fairy-land once they kept
When Goethe and Kant and Beethoven swept
The harp of life, and led to praise
The souls that thought on wisdom's ways;
Out of the moral realm where ruled
The faith of men whom Luther schooled:
See to what depths of doom they fled,
By Nietzsche, Treitschke, Bernhardi led.
1918

A WAY TO AVENGE

Don't you think it would be wiser
Just to let the former Kaiser
Take a raft and have the freedom of the seas?
Tell him, Go and loose his mania
Chasing wraiths the *Lusitania*
Left to wander, till he placate each of these?

Don't you think the Bolsheviki,
Who are brainless and so cheeky,
Should be gathered to an island far from shore;—
One that Germany has given
Would make them a fitting haven,—
Where they might destroy each other evermore?
1918

YAP

Somewhere, lost to the mind of man,
Was the Island of Yap. Since earth began
Its fame not yet in our annals ran.

And none knew whether 'twas near or far,
Or if 'twas isle or name of a star,
Till victory made it the spoils of war.

In the greatest war that on earth has been
We put our wealth and our fighting men,
And said, "All goes—and we care not when!"

And not for a prize had we begun:
Liberty called, and we counted it fun
To help a friend, and to whip the Hun.

But when it came to the settling up,
And the Hun was led as goat to the dup,
Our friends presented this loving-cup

To our Uncle Sam—to his great surprise.
He stroked his chin, and he rubbed his eyes,
And said, "No, thanks!" And then looked wise.

John Bull said, "Take it, along with Guam."
And the Tiger exclaimed, "How glad I am!"
"Then, just as you please," said Uncle Sam,—

"I think I can put it upon the map;
And if peace be there, I can take a nap,
With one eye wide on the wily Jap."

1919

"INTO A FAR COUNTRY"

In Memoriam, Theodore Roosevelt,

Transitus in lucem, Jan. 9th 1919.

"Into a far country"—the artist * hath said,
Our hero departed, to realms of the dead;
Waving a farewell, as he leaps from the crag,
Sombbrero in hand, lifted high to the flag!
Farewell to his friends, and farewell to his foes;
Farewell to a country that loved him, he knows.
Whatever the land into which he hath gone,
In this he left grieving, his fame shall live on.

"Into a far country"? Perchance not so far
From planet we ride, unto some outer star
Where glory undimm'd on his brow shall abide,
But we too may find him, and keep by his side.
The last high adventure he took, as on earth
Each conflict he chose in achieving his worth;
And left us his counsel, "Stand firm by the right!—
Ye too shall fare well, and shall come into light."
1919

* Mr. Stuart Morris, in *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

THE PASSION

God says, "Bring my earth to peace!"
Man attains to hear the Voice;
Harks a sweet evangel, "Cease,
O earth's deep discordant noise:
Time is now, Rejoice!"

On his brow the ambient flame,
Bone and nerve are nursed in fire;
Spirit gripped so by the Name,
Can his fealty ever tire?
In his hand a lyre.

Lowly nurtured, from the sod
He bears kinship to the race;
Borne on vision, he with God
Finds the fashion of His face
Is a will to trace.

Stirred as Wordsworth touring France,
Trained on Saul's Arabian sands;
He, a seer of truth's free lance,
Calls, where wreckage strewn our strands,
"Loose, O Night, thy bands!"

Let the dawn rise, daystar spring!
Cities, quit your fevered sleeps!
Spires and turrets, wake and fling
Far your lethargies! The steep
Redden. Stir the deeps!"

He the dawn's glow in the bush
Sees; to lifted altar kneels;
Burgeoned almond times; hears rush
Amber clouds whose beryl wheels
Eye what wrongs he feels.

He looks how on looms of pain
One with fingers on the night
Weaves the lightning's tangled skein
That, as He, His creatures might
Vestured be with light.

Yet he looks how on the earth,
'Neath such glories, there is sleep;
How His fanes of grace have dearth,—
While without His virgins keep,
And to Tammuz weep.

Jealous of the temple, sees,
Lo, what weariness attends;
Zeal forgotten—how to please
Ease and wealth the end of ends:
Till, what wrath amends?

Watching till, as gloom to him,
Glory from the threshold ceased,
Paused above the cherubim;
Then to shame the city leased,—
As unto the east,

To its mount, it grieving went.
"Hence, the nerve of faith is numb:
Tho' I in my toils be spent,
Zion's oracles are dumb
Until Shiloh come."

Hence in bitterness and heat
Of his spirit strode a man.
Tho' he knew that in the street
On his words they placed a ban,
He their herald ran.

They at times would briefly pause,
Say, "List! lo, a lovely song,
Pleasing voice! But no, his cause
Thought and Trade bear not with long:—
Oh, that Truth were strong!"

Yet in weakness hath he strength,
In his word is breath of God;
And he cries, "Behold, at length,
Waving lily flail the sod,
Zepher shame the rod!

Tho' thy day may be prolonged,
Visions fail, and no man care;
Tho' to Baal ye have thronged,
Princes say, 'It is not near';
I can not forbear.

Daughter of my people, hear!
They may slightly heal thy hurt:
Ethics, learning cry, 'Lo, here
Ye have peace'—yet in the dirt
Art thou, as thou wert!

Me, alas! what are my groans,
Spirit-whelm'd? Oh, Thou a fire
Hast shut up within my bones:
Quench it? Ah, it mounteth higher!
—Sunk within the mire,

It becometh as a marle,
None with me but forms of fear;
Waves of flame so whip and snarl,
Hell to me, not them, seems near!
Yet there speaketh clear:—

'Prophet of my people, cry:
Israel, Judah, virgins fair,
Were my daughters. To them I
Grace and beauty gave to share.
Comely in my care,

I their loves in springtime woke,—
Wanton Babel's gauds they wore!
When my pride fell with a stroke,
Aholah first her tresses tore,
Aholibah the more.

Little wonder, from thine eyes,
O my prophet, with a stroke
Thy desire is taken. Rise,
Show them why their pride I broke,
Why by thee I spoke,'

Faith! Ah, such is man's belief:
Such his vision—and his deed!
Such his want, without relief,
Where Thy help surpasses creed,
Thou of love indeed!

What was once Thy pleasant plant
Is a stem for alien slips;
Life that ne'er had need be scant
Bears the quirk of evil quips,
Bears the whirl of whips.

For they at the very door
Of Thy far-famed house of prayer
Grind the faces of the poor,
Bind the tresses of the fair,—
Priests, how little care!

In cathedrals, chapels, cells,
They are chanting their *Thee God*;
Whilst what fiends, in all earth-hells,
Hold *Thee Man* beneath the rod!
Eucharist—whose blood?

And in learning's halls, alas!
Seldom hearts with truth are stirred;
Rare the sword may from them pass
Bathed in heaven. For Thy word
Lightly there is purred.

Bif! see here, to faith a shock;
Pish! another there to art;
Science makes our temple rock,
Culture cools the ardent heart:
Hold, lest Heaven start!"

Then he looks, and thro' the day,
Woven dark with mystery,
Comes a fear lest, turned away,
God himself conspires to see
If the servant be

Yet of faith when He withdraws;
Zealous tho' his Maker shows
Not a care when tooth and claws
Tear the helpless, and dispose
Virtue to her woes.

"Clouds and darkness round about,
Habitation of Thy throne
Justice is, and—may we doubt?—
Judgment, when Thy very own
Strive for truth, alone?

True, a rainbow spans the moor—
Living beauty limned and hung
In Thy palace,—yet the poor
Find its fairy gold is wrung
From their toils, unsung.

Everywhere the good and ill
So commingle, who can tell
What is wholly good, or still
What so evil, out of hell,
Some will say it well?

Mystery, and all too deep,
Life and law and love possess;
Frailty makes them often cheap,
Clothes them in a motley dress.
I believe—or guess?"

When from green to gold the oak
Of his strength time duly turns,—
Leaves quite fallen, branches broke,—
Still within his heart there burns
Hope that in youth yearns.

Of the Voice some echo keeps
Him like to what other man?
For in him there never sleeps
Spirit that in youth so ran,—
Nor such spirit can.

Yet the evil world has borne
Much away, leaves much within.
Gray Experience, thin and torn
Lays the locks o'er what hath been
Undeiled of sin.

Thro' the years his steps have gone
Upward, forward, nor restrained
By his anguish. Now as John
In Machaerus, hope is chained
Ere his cause is gained.

Ere he sees the Kingdom's form
Rise from earth, like bleaching bones
Touched of Spirit, as the storm
Once of Armageddon's groans
Turned to rhythmic tones.

Fearing how earth's Error, strong
To the battle, gains the field;
Valor vanquished, stills the song,
Exurgat Deus; makes to yield
Scepter Right should wield.

Trusting how earth's frailty, Good,
Fainting falls, yet in the rise
Mounteth higher, counteth blood
As of virtue's gain true price,—
Boasteth sacrifice!

Till at last the snowy cloud,
Or of age or mercy, dips
To his summit. Tho' unbowed,
Sursum corda on his lips,
He of a Marah sips.

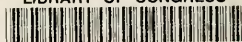
God says, "Bring my earth to peace!"
Man, "Thou, take my weary days,—
Gladly spent. Ah, Time's release
Guerdon is! Renewed in praise,
I shall learn Thy ways!"

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